
APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

This series of notices covers the interval between the days of St. Vincent and the end of the eighteenth century. Certain accounts of the edifying lives of many of St. Vincent's companions have already appeared. Others, of the same epoch, have yet to be collected; others again will follow, as closely as possible, in chronological order.

These biographies are published with a view to edification. Many possess historical interest for the whole Congregation of the Mission, especially for those who dwell in establishments once occupied by men whose lives and memories are here retraced.

Collet, in his *Life of St. Vincent de Paul*, briefly alluding to the labors of some of our missionaries in Algiers and Tunis, expresses regret at his inability to give fuller accounts, in these words: "It must be acknowledged that we diminish the lustre of those heroic, Christian lives by abridging details." The lives of more than twenty others that lie hidden amid the archives of St. Lazare's, would, if published, greatly edify all who are capable of appreciating piety and religion. (Vol. II, p. 428.)

Rohrbacher, in his "*Universal History of the Catholic Church*," renders the same testimony and expresses the same wish. "Among the archives of St Lazare's," he writes, "are the acts of many other martyrs, which, it were desirable to publish for the glory of God and of His Saints." (Book 87, 2d edition, Vol. XXV, p. 437.)

The greater number of notes, given here, have never before been published. Some have already appeared

in the Memoirs of the Congregation of the Mission; but, independently of the fact that they were written in French, and that they have not been translated, and, are not to be found in the houses of our several Provinces, many irrelevant facts are introduced and scattered promiscuously throughout the volume. We give the memoirs here in an abridged form, with all matter eliminated that would not subserve to the end we have in view in giving these lives publicity.

We also introduce, occasionally, a very brief notice bearing upon an historical fact, or citing some pious maxims or examples. Missionaries who now dwell in places, where the names of those true servants of God are still held in veneration, will appreciate these tributes to their memories; they are the most precious archives of their establishments, links of a chain which we desire to preserve unbroken.

God grant that in resuming these memoirs, we should seek nothing but that which the spirit of St. Vincent suggests; that is, to be edified and encouraged by the examples of the Missionaries who have preceded us.

NOTES ON DECEASED PRIESTS, CLERICS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION.

BROTHER MARTIN JAMAIN,
Clerical Student.

Letter of St. Vincent de Paul Announcing the Death of Brother Jamain.

PARIS, April, 1645.

Reverend dear Confrère : (1)

The Grace of Our Lord be with you forever !

These lines will inform you that the number of Missionaries in our heavenly home has just been augmented by the recent happy departure from this life of one of

(1) To the Superior of each house of the Company.

APPENDIX.

iii

our students, good Brother Jamain (2), a native of Andieu, whom God called from his theological studies here below, to the instant acquisition of that heavenly science above.

His exemplary life and holy death, give us reason to hope that he is now in the enjoyment of eternal blessedness. It is not my present purpose to expatiate upon his many virtues; partly, because I have not time, and again, because we have not yet held a conference upon his life and death. I content myself now with assuring you that I never remarked any habitual fault in him. He possessed in a high degree, the spirit of a true missionary, particularly, humility, simplicity, meekness, submission, exactness not only in the Seminary, but, at College, where, the most fervent, generally grow relaxed. He had frequent spells of illness and, in the midst of sufferings, manifested the greatest patience and resignation to the divine will, although the consequent interruption to his studies, occasioned him many humiliations.

His last illness was only of eight days' duration, but he endured more during that time for the love of our divine Savior, than he could have suffered during many ordinary years; because his anguish rendered the practice of virtue very difficult. It was a marvel that, in such physical agony, he could even think of God.

His illness began suddenly, with a severe colic, on the fourth Sunday of Lent. A few days later, he was attacked with inflammation of the lungs, which soon carried him off; oppression and acute pains caused him indescribable agony, but he bore all with wonderful patience and tranquility. When told that he must soon die, he expressed his acquiescence without any sign of anxiety—merely saying: “Father, what ought I to do?” He received the last Sacraments with great

(2) Martain Jamain, a native of Andieu, diocese of Treves, was received into the Congregation of the Mission, in Paris, October 8, 1640, and made his vows October 10, 1642.

devotion and peace of soul, and had the happiness of gaining the Jubilee. Up to his last sigh, he practised virtues that won Heaven for him. He made continual acts of virtue either in the heart or with the lips, particularly, when any one suggested those pious acts.

His agony was short; we may believe that, in this, God rewarded the mortifications which he had practised in the time of health. I cannot refrain from mentioning a few circumstances which were remarked before and after his death that intimate to us that our good Brother's death was precious in the sight of God.

1st. He had the happiness of devoutly kissing the Crucifix immediately before he breathed his last. 2ndly.: He expired just as those around him were concluding the prayers for the recommendation of the soul, at these words: *Pervenire mereatur ad gloriam regni celestis*. 3dly.: He died on Passion Sunday which was also the Feast of St. Francis de Paul, whose simplicity and humility he had so faithfully copied. 4thly.: It was the day of the opening of the Jubilee. 5thly.: He was interred opposite the Crucifix in the Church of St. Lazare. 6thly.: Some days previous to his death, he foretold that, contrary to the opinion of his physician, he would not live over Sunday.

We have every reason to believe that these incidents were not fortuitous, but, that they occurred by a special, divine dispensation, the better to manifest the happy state of that beautiful soul. Let them not, however, prevent you from discharging your accustomed obligations in his regard as to the other deceased members of the congregation, as we have already done here. We had Solemn High Mass for him here, on the day of his burial, April 3d. May God grant us the grace of imitating his virtues, that we may one day follow him to the abode of glory! I am, in the love of our Lord and His Holy Mother,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

VINCENT DE PAUL,
I. S. C. M.

APPENDIX.

v

REV. LOUIS ROBICHE.

Marseilles, Jan. 27, 1645.

Letter of St. Vincent Announcing the Death of Father Louis Robiche.

PARIS, May 3rd, 1645.

Rev. dear Confrère :

The Grace of Our Lord be forever with us !

You have been already informed of the death of our dear Father Robiche, Priest of our congregation, at Marseilles. But, probably you have not yet received the details of his illness, death and virtues, which you will be glad to learn for your consolation and the edification of your little company.

For this purpose, I address to you these lines, though rather late, circumstances not permitting me to attend sooner to this duty. I here impart what I learned from missionaries who labored with him even to the last year of his life, who waited on him in his illness, received his last sigh, and followed him to the grave.

While this faithful laborer in the Lord's vineyard was engaged with his confrères, catechising, preaching, hearing confessions and consoling the poor galley slaves; particularly the sick, God, to increase his merit and enhance his reward, permitted him to be attacked by a malignant fever on the Feast of the Epiphany last. The fever lasted twenty-one days, during only four of which, his mind was clear. During his lucid interval, he received the last Sacraments in full consciousness. He greatly edified the company even in his feverish ravings and in a state of lethargy. If any one suggested some pious aspiration, or, the acts of faith, hope, charity or contrition, he would rally, for a few moments, and repeat the prayers and acts with great devotion. His resignation to the divine good pleasure was admirable. He declared that it was well for him to be reduced to such sufferings. Since, whatever God

ordains, is best for us. He unhesitatingly complied with whatever was required of him, refusing nothing that was presented him. He talked continually, but incoherently and in a suppressed tone; all his words referred to God. He expressed unbounded gratitude to the divine bounty for permitting him to die in the congregation, to which he vowed fidelity to his last breath. He gave up his beautiful soul to his Creator just as his confrères began the *Subvenite sancti*, at the words: *accurrite angeli*; thinking that he had already expired. His death occurred Jan. 27th.

The charity that he exercised towards the poor sick galley slaves, so won the heart of the Marsellais, that although no preparation had been made for grand obsequies, and only a few benefactors were invited to the funeral, the concourse of people was so great that the body had to be let down into the basement chapel, that everyone might view the remains. As they looked upon him, they lifted their eyes and hands to Heaven exclaiming, "Oh! the Saint? Oh! the beautiful soul!" And although the apartment was so spacious that one hundred persons could behold him at once, they climbed upon the windows-sills and improvised steps and ladders to obtain a better view. Among other remarkable signs of devotion, may be cited that of a man of quality who tore fragments from a cushion that was stained with his blood, and, others broke off pieces of his pulpit; others again carried off droppings from the wax tapers that burned around his coffin, and would, if allowed, have carried off everything about him to keep as relics. When his remains were brought into the chapel, the crowd knelt, and many tried to kiss the feet of the departed. As the rumor of his sanctity spread far and wide throughout the city, many visited his grave through devotion and to secure graces through his mediation.

These facts, dear confrères, bear witness to his sanc-

tity. But, I attach much more importance to the virtues that he practised, particularly since his entrance to the community, than to anything else. I do not remember ever to have remarked a fault in him ; nor to have heard of one. On the contrary, whilst in the seminary, he edified all by his humility, meekness, kindness, charity, obedience and piety. May God grant us the grace of profiting by his example. He was thirty-five years old; his constitution was strong, with no taint of disease. Which should warn us to hold ourselves in readiness to appear before God, since we have no security of this life. Let us labor to garner up a harvest of good works to plead our cause on the day of doom. Such is the lesson we must draw from this death, to him, no doubt, so blessed. May we soon feel the effects of his intercession. And since we cannot be sure that he no longer needs ours, I beg you, gentlemen, my confrères, be careful to offer for his eternal repose, three Masses according to the custom of the company. And our Brothers will offer one communion and recite the rosary once for the same intention.

Here, all have complied with their duties in his regard ; although, we do not believe that he needs our help. The voice of the people, which is the voice of God, proclaims him blessed. His death was, in a certain sense, a martyrdom, since he exposed his life in labors, undertaken for Christ's sake, for the corporal and spiritual welfare of the poor sick ; and he died of a malady he contracted by attending a person attacked with a contagious disease. Had I time to enumerate the acts of mortification, of heroic virtue that I have heard related of him by our Priests in a conference we have held here concerning him ; you would better understand the happy state of his soul. The sure mark of a good and holy death, is a good and holy life. Such as this apostolic soul led, at least, during the two years we had the happiness of possessing him in our company. O, gentlemen! how much reason we

have to love our vocation and to prove ourselves worthy of it, since it affords us means in a short time, of leading, here below, holy lives and dying the death of the Saints.

May God grant us this grace!

I am, in the love of our Lord and of His holy Mother,
You very humble and obedient servant,

VINCENT DE PAUL,
I. S. C. M.

REV. HUMBERT DUNOTS.

Abbey of Saint Sauveur at Sabina, 1645.

Rev. Humbert Dunots was born at Franche Comté, near St. Claude, in the diocese of Besançon, in 1602. He was received into the Congregation of the Mission at Annecy in 1642.

Whilst Father d'Horgny was Superior of the House at Rome, Father Humbert Dunots accompanied him on his mission through the Roman Campagna.

In 1645, the Missionaries exercised their apostolic zeal in the diocese of Tivoli with wonderful success.

At the approach of the Paschal Season, Cardinal Barbarini, commendatory abbé of St. Sauveur in Sabina, requested them to take up their abode at the Abbey, so as to evangelize the surrounding villages.

They did so, and effected much good. The poor villagers, consoled and encouraged, became so devoted to the missionaries that they desired, if possible, to retain them.

These Priests went through the villages, hearing confessions, instructing and preaching. They assisted the dying at the risk of their own lives, for many were attacked by contagious diseases.

Father Humbert Dunots having gone to administer the last sacraments to a man who was dying of the plague, contracted the disease and, died a few days later, a martyr to his zeal.

REVEREND GERMAIN DE MONTEVIT.

Bar-le-Duc, Feb. 1640

Germain de Montevit, Born at Camberton, Near Coutances, Was Received
Into the Congregation of the Mission in Paris, April 19, 1638,
Having Been Already Raised to the Priesthood.

February 26th, 1640, Saint Vincent wrote to Father Lebreton, Superior at Rome :

God has called to Himself good Father de Montevit, whom you knew at the Seminary. He died at Bar-le-Duc in the odor of sanctity, at the College of the Jesuits who had the charity to lodge him and another Priest in their own establishment, whilst Father de Montevit labored to procure corporal and spiritual food for five or six hundred poor people who formed ranks and walked two and two to his funeral, bearing lighted tapers and weeping like children over a loving and beloved father. The Reverend Pastor wrote me many notable things in his praise.

We here transcribe the letter of Father Roussel, Rector of the College of Bar-le-Duc, to St. Vincent :

“You have been informed of the death of Father Montévit whom you sent here. He suffered much during his last and protracted illness. I can truly say that I never have seen greater patience and resignation than his. Not an impatient word escaped his lips—his conversation proved his solid piety. The physician frequently declared that, in all his practice, he had never met a more humble and simple patient. He communicated several times during his last illness, besides receiving twice as viaticum. For one week, he was delirious, but was conscious during the administration of extreme unction. Immediately afterwards, his delirium returned. Finally, he died as, through God’s mercy, I desire to die.

The two Chapters of Bar and the Augustinian Fathers

attended his funeral, but the most beautiful feature of that sad cortège was the procession of the six or seven hundred poor who followed him to the grave, each one bearing a lighted taper, and all weeping like children over the death of a devoted father. He had a strong claim on the gratitude of the poor. His last illness was brought on by his zealous efforts to minister to their wants. He was always among them, inhaling the fetid atmosphere in which they dwelt. He was so assiduous in hearing their confessions, both morning and afternoon, that I could never prevail upon him to take a short walk by way of relaxation. We have buried him near the confessional in which he was seized with his last illness and garnered a rich harvest of merits which he shall enjoy for all eternity. Two days before his death, his companion was attacked by a violent fever, that kept him one week on the brink of the grave. He has recovered. His illness was the result of his unremitting labors among the poor. Christmas eve he spent twenty-four hours without food or rest and left the confessional only to say Mass. Your Priests are condescending and docile save in following advice given them to take a little rest. They seem to think that their bodies are not of human mould and, that their span of life is necessarily short.

As to the Brother, he is a very pious young man. He cared for those two Priests as assiduously as the most exacting patients could desire.

See Collet, Life of St. Vincent de Paul, Book IV, Vol. I, p. 298.

APPENDIX.

xi

REV. ANTHONY DUFOUR,
Amiens, 1644.

Anthony Dufour was Born at Montdidier, Diocess of Amiens; Entered the Congregation of the Misslon in Paris, December 31, 1639; Pronounced his Vows Sept. 29, 1642.

In the year 1644, the Congregation of the Mission was threatened with the loss of its holy founder; the greatest loss it could sustain. The Saint lay at the point of death. The children of the holy priest plunged in grief, knew not what to do. Some gave themselves up to sighs and tears. Others made a vow to our Lady of Chartres for his restoration. But no one gave stronger proof of desire for the recovery of the holy man, than a young priest named Anthony Dufour, of imperishable memory. He was sick at the time of St. Vincent's illness; and, when he learned that St. Vincent's life was in grave danger, he begged of God to accept his life in exchange for one more necessary than ever to the Church, the State—and particularly to his own congregation. From that time, St. Vincent's condition began to improve, but, the young priest declined perceptibly, and he died soon after.

He breathed his last at the midnight hour. At that very moment, they who kept watch in St. Vincent's apartment, distinctly heard three knocks at the door: opening it immediately, they found no one there. Vincent, who had not been informed of Dufour's death, requested a cleric of the community to recite the office of the dead, aloud. And when, at day-break, the sad news was announced, no one doubted that it had been communicated to St. Vincent by supernatural means.

Collet, *Life of St. Vincent de Paul*, book IV; p. 406.

REV. CLAUDIUS DUFOUR.

Madagascar, August 18, 1656.

Mr. Claudius Dufour was born in 1618 at Allanche, then, in the diocess of St. Flour. He was ordained Priest previous to his entrance to the Congregation of the Mission in Paris, May 4, 1644.

His piety, regularity and devotedness, attracted the attention of St. Vincent, who as soon as he had pronounced his vows, entrusted him with the direction of the House at Saintes. The missionaries were sent thither chiefly to instruct the country-people; but, almost immediately after his arrival, Father Dufour set about opening a seminary and organizing the ecclesiastical conferences as he had seen them conducted in Paris under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul.

The Bishop of Saintes, happy to second the zeal of the fervent missionary for the reformation of the clergy, entered into his views and lent him the aid of his authority.

The name of Father Claude Dufour is inseparably connected with early reminiscences of the Congregation on account of the efforts made by the evil one to interfere with his vocation. It gave St. Vincent an opportunity of addressing to him counsels that have afforded light and encouragement to many other souls tried by similar temptations. His tender love of God and his dread of the responsibility he incurred in conducting missions and directing the seminary, inclined him to a life of solitude. He desired to become a Carthusian. St. Vincent, to whom he submitted his perplexities, answered him: "I beg God not to permit the temptation you have against your vocation to trouble the peace of your soul. I know that the Carthusian order is more perfect in itself. But I do not believe that God calls you to it, after having called you here and that you corresponded to the inspiration of that call. His divine bounty has blessed you in a

APPENDIX.

xiii

special manner. So much so, that if you consider the matter well, you will be firmer in your vocation than ever; above all, if you choose that state that will enable you to meet the judgments of God more securely.

I beg you to weigh well the blessings of solitude on the one hand; and, on the other, the blessings that God works in you and through you. You will find that the latter are the more precious.

Consider, also, the conformity that your present way of life presents to that which Jesus Christ Himself led upon earth. It is your vocation; and one of the greatest necessities of the Church at this time is to possess laborers who endeavor to withdraw so many of its children from the ignorance and vice in which they grovel. This, should make you esteem the happiness of participating in the holy work of giving the Church good priests and good pastors.

You are aware, that although the contemplative life is more perfect than the other, it is not more so than a life that combines contemplation and action, as does your vocation, by the grace of God. But, were it otherwise, it is certain that God does not call everyone to the state of highest perfection. All the members of the body are not the head; and all the Angels do not belong to the first hierarchy. The inferior ranks of Angels do not desire to be higher. They are satisfied with the degree to which God has appointed them. And the blessed, who enjoy a lower degree of glory, bear no envy to those who are called higher. We must be satisfied with the state in which we are placed by the dispensation of Providence, and in which God will pour his blessings upon us.

This letter, so replete with wisdom, did not entirely dispel the fears of the pious Missionary. To another communication on the state of his conscience, the holy Founder of the Mission answered:

“I thank you very humbly for the confidence you

repose in me in asking my advice about entering the Carthusian Order. I will tell you simply what, at the hour of death, I would wish to have counseled you; which is, to remain in the vocation to which it has pleased God to call you; without giving ear to the suggestions of that evil spirit, the enemy to final perseverance in good begun. His design being to withdraw you from the state in which God has placed you, under pretext of working out your salvation more securely; but you would incur the risk of losing your soul. For, should the demon draw you from your vocation, he will either prevent you from entering that to which you aspire, or, he will withdraw you from it should you enter.

I have been told that one hundred Jesuits in Paris left their holy Institute under pretext of working wonders elsewhere, and the greater number grew relaxed in virtue, and have given reason to fear for their salvation. In the name of God, sir, remain firm in the state to which you have been called, and, reject any adverse temptation as inimical to the designs of the Creator over you and the many souls He desires to save through your instrumentality.

As a docile disciple, Father Dufour followed the advice of so enlightened a guide; and St. Vincent hastened to express to him the fullness of his joy. He wrote: "I cannot express the consolation with which my soul was filled when I learned the resolution with which God has inspired you. I believe, indeed, that there is joy in Heaven over it. For, alas! the Church, through the mercy of God, counts solitaries enough; and, too many idle members that trouble and disturb it. Its great need is to possess evangelical laborers to purify it, illumine it, and keep it united to its divine Spouse, and this you do, through the divine bounty."

Father Dufour was truly an apostolic man, and, sometime after, urged by the desire of imitating, more perfectly, the suffering and laborious life of the Man-

APPENDIX.

XV

God, he solicited the favor of consecrating his ministerial labors to the galley slaves of Marseilles or of Toulon. St. Vincent prepared him, in a measure, for something better still. He destined him to labor in the remote Island of Madagascar. He says : “ Because you have frequently communicated to me your desire to devote yourself to the salvation of distant nations, an opportunity presenting itself, I have offered you to God for this purpose. Furthermore, I have sent your name to Rome, whose approbation is necessary. So you are promised to divine providence to fulfill this work. Our Lord will continue, through you and by you, the mission He Himself began upon earth. Oh ! what a happiness to be chosen by God for one of the most important works to which a Priest can be called.”

The delay of embarkation being longer than was anticipated, Father Dufour was sent to Sedan. He was thence recalled to Paris, to direct the internal Seminary during the temporary absence of Father Alméras. We can imagine with what zeal that apostolic man must have inspired the novices of the rising Congregation. At last, in the month of September, 1655, he embarked, at Nantes, on a vessel bound for the Indies.

They stopped at the island del Ré. “ We weighed anchor in the bay of St. Martin, near Rochelle, October 29, 1655,” he wrote sometime later. The voyage lasted until the month of August, 1666.

The life of the fervent Missionary on board the vessel, la Maréchale was that of a Priest who everywhere feels urged to preach the Gospel, instruct and save souls.

He wrote : “ I have endeavored to follow, in every detail, a conference which I held with my dear confrères previous to our departure, relative to public prayers, catechism and other means of promoting the glory of God and our neighbors’ salvation. Although

we have learned, by experience, to alter our methods, to meet the varying humors of our sea-captains and, condescend to them in all that is not evil, although it may not seem to us the best. Seamen like short prayers."

"In Advent and Lent, I taught catechism three times a week. Even at other seasons, the greater number of my auditors, not yet reaching a fourth part of the crew, failed not to be present."

The days on which no catechetical instruction was given, I read them the life of a Saint or some other pious work, pausing from time to time, to repeat remarkable passages, to impress them on the minds of my hearers. I cannot describe the excellent effect produced by spiritual reading on our sailors. Not satisfied with listening to me, they read these lessons over privately. Three times a week, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, we recited the Chaplet in common. The evenings of Advent, we sang pious canticles. During Lent, and after Easter, we conversed on pious subjects. Before separating, I said a few pious words to them, that they might derive some spiritual profit from the time allotted to conversation."

"On the Feast of the Purification, the young men on board made their first Communion. They were well prepared for this Holy action. The band numbered twelve. A good soldier, on board, was of great assistance to me in teaching them their prayers, &c. I believe that God has made choice of him to teach catechism to the poor savages of Madagascar. He will devote himself to us, if we are willing to accept his services, and, if permitted, he will be glad to obtain admittance to the company."

"The good example that he and some others give are a great consolation to me, but there are others whose oaths and bad language are very displeasing."

The following remarks prove the authority acquired by the holy man: "When a sailor or a soldier is guilty

of blasphemy, he is put in irons, or I require him to ask pardon of God publicly and kiss the floor. Thanks be to God, a great improvement is manifest among them. But, when an officer, captain or lieutenant, lapses into these sins, I cannot remedy the evil."

All this was not accomplished without meeting many contradictions. But, continued Mr. Dufour, God granted me the grace of overcoming evil by good, and to gain, by patience, a glorious victory over the wrath of my enemies."

"I have made it a study to oblige them; and the proofs of my good will have been so many burning coals poured over their heads and inflaming them with charity towards God and friendship for me. It is certain that many, who opposed me for undertaking to lead the crew to a better life, have since helped me to succeed in my pious endeavor, which God has visibly blessed."

Passengers and sailors became much attached to the missionary.

He continues: "All assured me that they were glad I was with them, and begged me to accompany them as far as the Red Sea. They expressed their grief at my resolve to remain in Madagascar, because I was not commissioned to go elsewhere. They proved their affection by the confidence that they reposed in me."

All, without exception, came to confession, although many had long neglected to approach the tribunal of penance. Some for ten years.

To God alone be all the glory! "I feel so sustained by some extraordinary heavenly assistance, that I am ready to undertake anything that God may require of me, I say all this for the greater glory of God, to co-operate with His Grace. And I add, with the apostle: *Quis me separabit, &c.*, "Who shall separate me from the love of my God?" Nothing that is said discourages me, but rather animates me to do more, and nothing, sin excepted, can terrify me!"

Finally, they landed at Madagascar, but Father Dufour was destined to get only a glimpse of the "Land of Promise."

Scarcely had he stepped ashore, when he began his evangelical labors. A very few days later, he died.

Father Prevost, in an almost dying condition himself, informed Father Bourdaise, the oldest missionary at Madagascar, of the death of Father Dufour, whom he had welcomed so warmly and who would, he hoped, be, for a long while, the companion of his labors. He wrote :

"I cannot announce to you the death of our very dear Father Dufour without emotions of deepest sorrow. We know how great was that servant of God who breathed but for the glory of his divine Master, and who was so well calculated to extend His kingdom in this vast Isle of St. Lawrence. He had begun a dictionary of the native language, a catechism and several other works that bade fair to be of immense utility to these poor people; without interrupting his visits to the poor sick, who are always very numerous on St. Mary's Island. The measure of his merits and good works being full, the kind master of the vineyard called him to receive the full reward of his labors. Father Dufour's zeal was insatiable; but God kept an account of his good will."

A few days later, the good missionary who wrote the preceding lines, in his turn, succumbed, and Father Bourdaise, to whom they were addressed, announced the double loss to St. Vincent. "Father Dufour, he wrote, has just expired; he was a man whose sanctity no one questioned, not even those who betrayed him. In a short time, he acquired a high degree of glory both by his sufferings and by his labors. Father Prevost died one month after Father Dufour; they are buried side by side under the shadow of the Cross that they had erected. Father Prevost too, had labored

APPENDIX.

xix

much. I assure you, candidly, that whilst I am convinced of their virtues and the motive of the love of God that directed all their actions, I think they carried their zeal to excess. If they had used more moderation, they would be alive now. They often forded swollen streams and exposed themselves to heavy rains, without thinking to change their saturated clothing on their return. They practised great austerities and often ate but once a day. Had they been more prudent, they would be laboring now for the conversion of the poor Indian. But God will provide. I do not dwell upon my own great loss and sorrow. I believe they will obtain more conversions in Heaven by their prayers, than they could have wrought on earth."

Later on, Father Nicholas Etienne, a competent judge of apostolic virtues, catching, on the island of Madagascar, an echo of the virtues that the name of Father Claude Dufour revived, wrote to St. Vincent: "Father Dufour always appeared in our congregation like a luminous star, not only on account of his exhortations, his frequent and eloquent sermons, but, still more, by the practice of every virtue; particularly zeal for souls that he so much loved that for their sakes he willingly braved shipwrecks and shoals, and all the dangers and inconveniences of a long sea voyage, for the sake of carrying to poor savages the glad tidings of the Gospel. For ten or twelve years, he importuned his superior to grant him the favor of dying across the ocean in an infidel country, a favor that was granted him in the year 1655, to the deep joy of his heart; for he was consumed by a strong desire to promote, in the measure of his ability, the glory of God and the conversion of souls."

"He manifested these dispositions during his voyage when he preached, catechized, instructed the ignorant, reproved delinquents, old and young, without human respect."

“When the vessel was about to be lost and was leaking in every direction, Father Dufour assembled the crew and, addressing the officers who despaired of being saved, he told each one to raise his hand and promise God to do what he was about to propose to them, adding that if they complied, they would land in fifteen days. He was obeyed; all promised to make, without delay, a good, general confession. All were faithful to the promise but two, who died later, without the Sacraments.”

“But, on the fifteenth day, they had not yet sighted land—and the officers declared that all was over with them. Without evincing any surprise, he merely said that the sun had not yet set; and, he invited all to assist at Vespers. His advice was followed. Oh! marvel of God, who never abandons those who put their trust in him, Suddenly, the sailors shouted: “Land!” “Land!” It was the land of their destination, the island of Madagascar.”

“Then, they who had persecuted and denounced him, suddenly changed their opinion and proclaimed him a Saint, as I have heard from their own lips.”

Having at last reached that island, the object of his desires, he only remained there one week; during which time, he effected much good by his conversations with the French settlers there, by his charity for the sick, by several conferences which he held with Father Bourdais on the means of extending the kingdom of Christ and destroying that of Satan. He allowed himself no rest. He set out by sea for St. Mary's Island, at a distance of nearly two hundred leagues from the fort. When he reached it, he was warmly greeted by his dear companion, Father Prevost. He visited many of the sick. With the help of a young negro, who served him as interpreter, he erected twelve crosses, one on each of the twelve mountains of that island. But, the twelfth was planted in his own heart, for, immediately

after erecting it, he took sick of the malady that brought him to the grave, being already worn out, by labors and privations.

“We enjoyed the privilege of being under his direction in the seminary. God grant that having been his disciples, then his successors, in his journeys and foreign mission, we may also become the faithful imitators of his many virtues!”

REV. JOHN GUÉRIN.

Annecy, March 6, 1653.

“May the sweet consolations of our Lord descend upon us, wrote St. Vincent March 23d, 1653, (1) that we may lovingly bear the heavy losses the company has sustained in the death of two of its best subjects: Good Father Lambert (2), and Father Guerin (3), Superior of the House at Annecy, of whom the Rt. Rev Bishop of Geneva (4), makes most favorable mention, to use his own words, “with tearful eyes and inexpressibly heart-felt grief.” God blessed the direction and labors of his own servant, both in the interior of his spiritual family, and among the faithful generally. He expired on the 6th of this month after nine days illness (5.)”

(1) Letters sent to the Superior of each House in the Congregation.

(2) See his notes: 1st Series, Vol. 11, 1-28.

(3) Received into the Congregation in 1639.

(4) Charles Augustus de Sales, nephew and successor of St. Francis de Sales. The Bishops of Geneva, driven by the Protestants from their Episcopal city, had, with their Chapter, established their See in a neighboring city.

(5) St. Vincent added: “I believe I have already informed you of the death of Father Gurlet, a worthy missionary, whose death occurred a few days before Father Guerin’s in the same house.”

The following, is a letter from Rev. Father Charles, Priest of the House at Annecy, to St. Vincent, on the virtues and edifying death of Rev. Father Guérin:

MARCH 14, 1653.

“One week ago, I sent you an account of the death of our very dear and worthy superior, who survived Father Gurlet only four or five weeks.”

“It seems that the latter, in his last illness, gave Father Guérin to understand that he would soon follow him. He asked him several times if he was ready to depart with him. So urgently did he repeat this question, that he evidently longed to take him with him. He even said that he would come back for him. They are buried side by side in the Church of Our Lady at Annecy.”

“I think it may be well to add a few notes on the virtues we remarked in our dear confrère, since, it is customary to do so. Last evening, we held a conference with Father Huitmille and our Brother Francis. Many noteworthy and edifying remarks were the result.”

“It seems to me that we, who had known him so long and so intimately, did not appreciate his virtues and perfections as much as externs. Whether it is that constant intercourse made us familiar with them and that this familiarity made them appear less extraordinary. Our deceased Superior was remarkable for the virtues of humility and simplicity, inseparable companions and the guardians of other virtues. Even externs were greatly edified by them. Simplicity was manifest in the most minute details; in his garments and articles of devotion. One day, he purchased some medals to which to attach indulgences. I was surprised to find that they had no intrinsic value; they were not worth a Savoy-farthing, the least of all coins. This simplicity shone in his conversations. Whatever might be the quality and condition of those with whom he conversed, he expressed his thoughts and opinions,

with great candor, without any display or affectation, in his language, which greatly impressed all who knew him, and all the more excited their esteem and admiration. The Bishop of Geneva assured me, recently, that he had remarked his great simplicity, particularly, when he accompanied him in the visitation of his diocess. He further remarked that with the simplicity of the dove, Father Guérin combined the prudence of the serpent; he always spoke in season and with a view to the consequences of his words."

"This simplicity led him to refer all things to God, towards whom he tended with great purity of intention, without troubling himself even about the good example he might afford by performing some good works with more show and publicity, I remember that once, whilst making an interior communication, I remarked that I thought we should, in the performance of some good works, keep in view the duty of public edification. He quickly observed that we should be actuated by no such motive, but go straight to God, performing our actions solely for him, without stopping at intentions which, though good in themselves, were less perfect and more dangerous."

"His humility induced him to make himself all to all. One day, in the garden, he met the gardener pruning trees, and he very affably gave him some instructions for the better performance of his task."

"Humility was the solid foundation on which rested all other christian virtues, particularly those of his holy vocation."

"He was conspicuous for charity and zeal for souls. Except, during the hours appointed by the rule for recreation, he would have us, all the time, engaged in missionary labor."

"Towards the end of his last illness, his mind wandered, and he spoke continually of missions to be given in Geneva, where, he said, the heretics had sent him

word that they were waiting for him. The same thing happened him about six years ago, during a mission which he gave in the winter season on our mountains. He dreamed that Geneva was converted; that the Bishop had returned to that city and, that he hoped to go there soon to celebrate Mass."

"When he heard of great things being done for God's glory in foreign lands, his heart was deeply touched and tears flowed from his eyes. He was ready, in a spirit of obedience, to set out for Barbary in spite of his advanced age and many infirmities. I heard him say that whilst he was pursuing his studies under the Jesuit Fathers, he presented himself to them to be employed, if they willed, in the missions of China, Japan, Canada, &c."

"His zeal was alike fervent and disinterested. He really sought only the glory of God. It mattered not to him through whom it was secured; and, when he heard of the success of other missionaries, he rejoiced as much as if the good had been effected through the instrumentality of some of our own congregation."

"This true zeal was accompanied by all other virtues, without which, it is generally sterile. He was patient, long enduring and laborious. In giving missions, he catechised, preached, heard confessions in spite of great physical sufferings; he always chose the worst for himself, and in every respect was most unselfish. His patience and meekness were unalterable, and he always recommended great mildness in the direction of souls. Harshness and bitterness, he declared, were only calculated to repel and discourage penitents."

"His zeal was equally conspicuous in the office of Superior. He ardently desired the welfare and perfection of his subjects, amongst whom, he sought to inculcate the spirit of their state, the virtues that characterize it and, above all, perfect obedience to the rules."

APPENDIX.

XXV

“These virtues acquired for him universal esteem and affection, which were apparent in the wide-spread sorrow occasioned by his death throughout all classes of society, ecclesiastics, religious communities, especially the good Sisters of the Visitation, who offered many prayers for him during his illness, and assisted him in many ways. Seculars, of all ranks, manifested deep regret; a poor countryman who often had been sent by a distinguished family to enquire about the state of his health, could not restrain his grief when he heard of his death; but bewailed him as sincerely as if he were his own father.”

“Time fails me to enter into further details on the virtues of our dear deceased, to tell the trials, labors and fatigues he endured for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“I conclude by assuring you that his obsequies were very solemn, and, attended with unusual pomp, on account of the presence of his Lordship, the Bishop of Geneva, the Count de Sales, a great number of the Reverend Canons of the Cathedral, of the Seminary. Nearly all the clergy of the diocese, when informed of his death, hastened to offer the Holy Sacrifice for the repose of his soul.”

In the love of Our Lord and of His Holy Mother,

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient Son,

FRANCIS CHARLES,

I. S. C. M.

REV. LOUIS NOEL.

Algiers, July 22nd, 1647.

Experience had taught St. Vincent the spiritual and corporeal needs of poor galley slaves. Understanding the good that might be effected among them by missionaries endowed with the apostolic spirit, and the glory that would thus be offered to God, he determined,

the year after the departure of the first missionaries to Tunis, 1645, to send two others to Algiers. These latter, were Rev. Louis Noel and John Barreau, a young cleric, who went in quality of consul.

St. Vincent's idea, in having a consul appointed, was to facilitate the introduction of his priests into that part of the Regency.

Furnished with the salutary advice, and encouraged by the charitable example of their venerated Father, the two missionaries abandoned themselves, without reserve, into the hands of Providence; and, bidding a last farewell to their confrères, they set out for Marseilles, and reached Algiers in 1646.

Father Noel was born at Cologne and, when twenty-five years old, was received into the Congregation of the Mission, November 12, 1643.

On reaching Algiers, they easily gained access, like Father Guérin in Tunis, to the bagnios—in order to minister to the slaves there engaged; but the case was different with regard to private houses, where the poor wretches were employed in large numbers.

St. Vincent wrote: "No quarter is granted to a Priest who is surprised in a Turk's house fulfilling the duties of his ministry." At first, a Priest was not at liberty to walk through the city. The ecclesiastical costume was so distasteful to the Turks, who, mistaking the wearer for a Jew, in their hatred of that nation called him derisively the "Pope of the Jews." "When I walk through the city," wrote Father Noel, "the boys run after me, and their mildest caress is to spit in my face or, if they venture near enough, to buffet my cheeks.

The bagnio, in Algiers, was an immense building divided into many compartments, or low dark cells, each one containing fifteen or sixteen slaves. A mat for some, the damp ground, for the greater number, was their only bed; these unwholesome places were

infested by vermin, insects and scorpions. These bagnios sometimes contained five or six hundred slaves. When there was no room for them in the cells, they slept in the yard, or on the terraces, within the enclosure.

A head *Bachy* or guard, acted as superintendent and often exercised his authority very cruelly. In the midst of such crowds, was the missionary called upon to display his zeal.

In compliance with St. Vincent's wishes, Father Noel turned his attention first to the clergy, secular and regular, who had fallen into captivity. Previous to Mr. Noel's coming, the laymen, in slavery, out of respect for the Priesthood, and, in order, to participate in the spiritual benefits of their ministry, managed to offer some remuneration to masters who held in subjection captives of sacerdotal character, to procure for them immunity from hard labor. But those ecclesiastics, without employment and devoid of zeal, freer in the thralldom of slavery than under the eye of a Superior, strangely abused the charity of their fellow-captives and became guilty of scandals alike degrading to their sacerdotal and their christian character. These disorders were, at times, so great, that shortly before the arrival of Mr. Noel, a Turk had condemned again to chains, a priest whose conduct was a terror to Jews and Mahometans.

Invested with the faculties of Grand Vicar of Carthage, a Bishop's see *in partibus*, on which Algiers depended, Father Noel endeavored to suppress this dissoluteness. His words full of unction, his tender compassion, his eagerness to aid them, above all, his own example, had a salutary influence over those poor souls and gave them to understand that such disorders, odious in any land, were peculiarly so in an infidel country. He had the consolation of bringing many to detest their wanderings, and, to accept, in the spirit

of penance, the rigors of slavery; and, even become useful aids in his apostolic labors. In some rare cases, he was under the painful necessity of exercising the spiritual authority with which he was invested, by denying the incorrigible, approach to the Altar; but, this very severity was, to the infidels, a vindication of the religion of Christ,—by proving that crimes were opposed to its tenets. Order and discipline were established by degrees. Infidels ceased to blaspheme the name of God; and, the body of christians, found nothing in their guides to justify apostasy.

The advantage that Father Noel secured to the slaves—was to confirm them in the faith, encourage them in their trials and hard labors, teach them to sanctify their sufferings and the annoyances of every description to which they were daily exposed; forming them to the practice of every virtue. There were among those hapless beings, a large number, known only to God, whose constancy to the faith amounted to heroism. Formerly, the slaves, visited only at long intervals, on occasion of ransoms offered by the Fathers of the Order of Mercy and the Trinitarians, left to themselves and their bitter reflections, were in a deplorable state. Many, discouraged at the thought of endless captivity, without one to utter a word of consolation, fell into despair. If the presence of the Missionary did not entirely banish these deplorable excesses, it greatly allayed them by gentle words, instructions full of light and unction, alms-giving and, above all, the facility afforded of frequenting the sacraments. They were so changed, by degrees, that if the new Church in Africa was less numerous than in the olden time, it was no less fervent. Every slave, under the weight of his chains, was, after a manner, a confessor suffering for the Faith; and, Our Lord had martyrs there, whom the holy Bishop of Carthage might have looked upon as his joy and his crown!

The Missionary required extraordinary prudence in ministering to slaves in private dwellings, always difficult of access. He would send a christian apothecary, in advance, who, after conversing with the sick, would tell the master that he could not prescribe for the patient without an order from the doctor. The Doctor was, of course, a missionary, who remained near at hand, awaiting the result of the conference, and, when introduced, he fulfilled the duties of his ministry at the dying bed; sometimes, in the very presence of the master, who, in his ignorance, mistook the holy rites for mystic treatment, or some specific unknown in Barbary, and, as, from time to time, the virtue of the Sacrament, through the soul, reacted on the body and restored the dying man to health, the Turks came to look upon the Priest as a skilful physician and applied to him in their own maladies. In this way, he became familiar to them, and his successors found the way open to them, even without a medical passport, to many houses.

But to how many dangers was the priest exposed! Above all, in carrying the Holy Viaticum to the sick. In that Infidel land, the God of the Christian was, in a double sense, "the Hidden God," and His way had to be carefully guarded from profane eyes. Two men composed the Savior's cortège. One, a poor christian, carrying under his cloak a lighted taper in a small lantern, holy water in a cruet, a folded surplice, a Ritual, a Burse containing a corporal and a purificator. The second, a priest, who carries suspended around his neck, a silken Burse holding a small silver or gilded case which encloses the Sacred Host. Under his soutan, he wears a stole, but, over all, he wears a cloak to conceal his treasure from the Turks. Both walk on from street to street, modest, recollected, silent, saluting no one by the way. By which signs, Christians recognize the sacred burthen, and, not daring to follow, they must content themselves with adoring their God in spirit and in heart!

Oh! marvel of the Most High! In the stronghold of slavery, the Savior regains His freedom. In the bagnio,—He is openly distributed to the slaves;—even a torchlight accompanies Him.

In some of those prisons, faithful pictures of that dark abode, “where Hope enters not,” He dwelt day and night, and, before His lowly tabernacle, gleamed a lighted lamp. A beacon light to despairing souls, “The Sanctuary Star.”



APPENDIX.

Father Noel.

(Continued.)

Soon the charity and courage of the missionary so impressed the Turks that their contempt gave place to admiration and the priest was left at liberty to exercise his zeal. He profited by this freedom to extend his works of mercy.

Like his confrères at Tunis, he did not confine himself to the visitation of the sick, his solicitude extended to all whose virtue and faith he knew were exposed.

A slave, resisting an infamous assault, inflicted a wound on his master's face ; it was a mere scratch, but sufficed to condemn him to the flames, under the charge of a homicidal attempt.

Father Noël, informed of the unjust sentence, was fortunate enough to gain access to the slave. And he exhorted him most earnestly to remain faithful to his God. The unfortunate man had the grace to proclaim his faith in Jesus Christ amid devouring flames.

But the plague, from which that country is never entirely exempt, broke out with redoubled violence in the spring of 1647.

Father Noël who, day and night, was in attendance on the plague-stricken Christians, at last fell a victim to the scourge.

July 22nd, 1647, he was called to his eternal reward; scarcely thirty years of age after a year spent in apostolic labors crowned with works and virtues ; that would have done honor to a long career.

Even the Mussulmans mourned his death. Seven or eight hundred Christians formed his funeral cortège. Two funeral sermons were preached : One in the chapel of the Regency, by a Carmelite Friar ; the other in the chapel of the Consulate, by a Franciscan, who, applying to the deceased the words of St. Jerome on Saint Paula, said, that Algiers had lost in that one man an exemplar of every virtue : *in morte unius omnes defecisse virtutes.*

St. Vincent then wrote to Brother Barreau, who was the only missionary left in Algiers, and who was only suffered to leave his prison in order to close, in death, the eyes of his beloved confrère. "Yesterday I received the sad, yet consoling, news of Father Noël's death. It made me shed many and frequent tears; but, tears of gratitude for God's mercy to the company in bestowing on it a priest, who loved our Lord so perfectly and attained so blessed an end."

Rev, James Lesage,

ALGIERS, May 12, 1648.

James Lesage, born at Aufey, diocess of Rouen, entered the Congregation of the Mission, Paris, aged twenty-five years, October 7, 1639.

After Father Noël's death, there was a holy, heroic competition to fill the vacancy created at Algiers.

The choice fell upon Rev. John Lesage. He left Paris in September or October, 1647. Before his departure from St. Lazare's, he received from St. Vincent the most prudent and touching advice.

Immediately after his arrival in Algiers, Father Lesage began to exercise the duties of the holy ministry, walking in the footsteps of Father Noël, whose zeal and apostolic labors were constant themes of conversation among the poor slaves.

These accounts of his confrère were a great encouragement to him amid his sore privations and never ending labors.

APPENDIX.

xxxiii

Although his appointed task seemed far beyond his strength, he undertook it with firm resolve and unbounded confidence in God ; for, having to attend to the spiritual necessities, not only of the French, but of a still larger number of Italian and Spanish slaves, he consecrated his few leisure moments to the acquisition of the languages spoken by the unfortunate captives.

The plague having subsided at the approach of winter, he availed himself of this truce of the scourge, to visit slaves in private houses, to console and strengthen them in the observance of our holy religion.

The following details will serve as a complement to all that has been said upon the labors of Missionaries engaged in the spiritual care of captives :

Friday, a day of rest for Mohammedans and numerous slaves, divine services were, with permission of overseers and masters, celebrated in all the bagnios. At 8 o'clock, the Missionary Priest, having already said prayers in common and heard the confessions of all who desired it, celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which was always immediately followed by a familiar instruction on Christian Doctrine.

Sundays and feasts of obligation, days on which the Turks required their slaves to work, the divine services were celebrated in the following order :

On the afternoon of the vigil, the Missionary repaired to one of the bagnios.

He, in the first place, heard confessions, then he consoled and encouraged the wretched captives. At night-fall, when the slaves returned from work, he began public prayers in Spanish, to which succeeded the singing of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; and confessions were heard until ten or eleven o'clock at night; then the missionary partook of a light repast, and reposed, for a short time, in some dark and narrow corner of the bagnio. At 2 o'clock in the morning, or even earlier,

according to the season, the missionary arose and entered the chapel, where morning prayers were said in common. He celebrated Mass, gave a sermon, distributed "the Bread of the Strong" to those who had prepared to receive. After Mass he saw privately, until daybreak, slaves who appeared most in need of consolation. Soon the cries and roars of overseers summoned the slaves to labor; and threats and blows hastened the steps of the sluggards and infirm.

In the meanwhile, the missionary made a hurried exit and returned to his own quarters, where parochial duties awaited him. He, afterwards, visited the sick in private dwellings to which he could gain access, and distributed to slaves, who called at the Mission House, such alms and alleviations as he had been able to procure for them.

This order, which obtained almost from the beginning of the Mission, was maintained by all the missionaries up to the time that slavery ceased to exist in that infidel land. These details render their repetition unnecessary in succeeding biographies.

Beside the daily duties of the Missionary Priest in Algeria, he availed himself of extraordinary circumstances that enabled him to extend his zeal. Every third year the Beys of Mascara, Titer, Constantine, &c., being obliged to send deputies to Algiers to convey their tribute money, took with them many slaves. Then a general mission was opened, for the latter, at the Mission House. He hastened to place at the disposition of the newly arrived slaves, besides corporeal relief, all the spiritual help they could desire. Then, reconciled to their God, they returned in peace to their deserts, blessing the charity of their benefactors, and conjuring the Lord to afford them, at some future time, an opportunity of having again recourse to them.

The missionaries did not confine their ministrations to spiritual aid, but made it their sweetest enjoyment and daily duty to minister to the slaves' corporeal wants.

Every Friday, after the morning services in the bagnio, the priest gave a small alms to each one present. On other days, Sundays, particularly, the slaves sometimes in great numbers, went, after the labors of the day, to the Mission House and received an alms from a priest or a Brother who, at the same time, addressed them some kindly words of counsel or good cheer.

When the establishment of missionaries in Algeria became known in France, many families, having relatives among the captives, had recourse to the charity of St. Vincent de Paul to inquire into their condition, send them aid and negotiate for their ransom.

At Algiers, as well as at Marseilles and Paris, the missionaries in Barbary willingly acted as intermediaries between the slaves and their kindred or friends; they acted as their correspondents and neglected nothing that was calculated to alleviate the hardships of their position, and this; always at their own expense, to spare the scant savings of those poor captives.

The following spring, 1648, the plague broke out with increased virulence and extended its ravages to the slaves. The missionary redoubled his energy to secure them some relief, and administer the sacraments to them in bagnios and private houses. Despite precautions, Father Lesage was attacked by the contagion and died May 12, 1648.

Rev. John Dieppe.

ALGIERS, May 2, 1649.

We cannot separate from the names of Fathers Noël and Le Sage, that of Father Dieppe. Abelly, the historiographer of St. Vincent, includes them in one common eulogy.

St. Vincent, he writes, sent to the city of Algiers, first: Father Noël, then Father Le Sage; after them, Father Dieppe, three good priests and three true mis-

sionaries; all three happily closed their holy careers. They lay down their lives in the cause of charity by courageously exposing themselves day and night, during the plague, which devastated Algiers in the years 1647 and 1648, serving poor plague-stricken christians who, but for them, would have died, like beasts, in total abandonment.

At the approach of death, those good priests manifested the disposition which through life had animated them for their God and their fellow-beings.

Father Dieppe died with his eyes fixed upon the crucifix which he held in his hands while he fervently repeated during the half hour his agony lasted, *majorem dilectionem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis*. That is, "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John XV.-13.) Abelly, *Life of St. Vincent de Paul*. Book 11; Edition of 1891, Vol. 11, p. 125.

Rev. John David, Rev. Edmund Deschamps and other Missionaries of
Étampes.

ÉTAMPES, 1652.

Rev. John David, born at Mézières, in 1627, received into the Congregation of the Mission, October 29, 1647. Rev. Ednie Deschamps, born at Dié, Diocess of Langres, in 1617; received into the Congregation of the Mission, Paris, October 5, 1643.

William Seguin Patrocles, Brother Coadjutor, born at Paris, in 1616; received into the Congregation, October 9, 1650.

"We seem to have reached the dregs of sorrow,"—wrote St. Vincent from Paris, July 24, 1642. Our common afflictions overburden us, and God has been pleased to visit us with individual sorrows.

We have just lost two excellent subjects: One is Father David, whom we sent to Étampes, to attend to the corporeal and spiritual wants of the poor inhabi-

APPENDIX.

xxxvii

tants whom the army and the siege have reduced to sickness and strange destitution.”

“This good Priest, so exerted himself, that he contracted a fever, of which he died three or four days ago. To-morrow, we shall send three others to assist good Father Deschamps, who still keeps up under his great labors. We have undertaken a similar duty at Palaiseau, where an army camped twenty days, where sickness and destitution are at their worst, and where seven or eight of our laborers have died one after another; which has obliged us to recall the survivors and send others there. One, of our dear deceased, is good Brother Patrocles, who, although young, was very prudent and pious, a native of Paris, and of honorable family.”

St. Vincent informed another missionary of Father John Deschamps' death in the following terms:

“God in His Providence has recalled unto Himself Rev. John David, a Priest of our company, of whom it may be said that in a short time, *explevit tempora multa*.

He had only been a fortnight engaged in the care of the poor sick at Étampes. The royal troops had been camped there for some time, and the air was impure, but not infected with contagion. Father Deschamps, with whom he labored in concert, assured me that he did all that a man sent down from Heaven could do with regard to confessions, catechetical instruction, corporeal assistance and the burial of the dead already in a state of decomposition. At Estréchy he buried twelve bodies that poisoned the atmosphere; after which, he fell sick and died. The same Father Deschamps wrote me that he had expressed some fear of the judgments of God before he expired, and that he cried out: “Lord, even if thou cast me into hell, I will never cease to love Thee.”

St. Vincent had to break the news of Father David's death to his sister. Having done so in words full of sympathy for her legitimate sorrow, he added, "Mademoiselle, I beg our Lord, Who is the one true Consoler of afflicted hearts, to comfort yours; and I beg you to consider the great motives you have to be resigned. In the first place, the will of God, Who has vouchsafed to reward this dear soul for all the services he rendered and all that he desired to render, particularly his desire to go to Madagascar, to labor for the conversion of infidels of whom you have heard him speak. It was an Apostolic work, which it was not given him to perform, but God keeps account of our good will. Secondly, the work in which he was engaged, when God called him to Himself, is one of the holiest that a creature can perform on earth, namely, to assist the suffering members of Jesus Christ corporally and spiritually, which he did, in the persons of the poor inhabitants of Étampes and its environs, where the army had camped a long while. Father David left them all poor and destitute, so that most of them would have perished but for the timely aid brought them from Paris by that good missionary and others, who are still in the place and, who have written assuring me that your Brother exercised in this great work, as much exactness, zeal and charity, as a man sent down from Heaven could do. In the third place, it is a blessing for him to have been recalled to Heaven whilst young and undefiled by the corruption of this world, in which occasions of sin are so frequent and miseries so great, that the living often understand how blessed are the dead who are delivered from them forever! This we can say of that holy Priest, your brother, he had not yet tasted of the false enjoyment, but real bitterness of the world, having been called from his childhood to the service of God, in so evident a manner, that whilst he sojourned amongst us, he

generously practised virtue and the exercises of his vocation, in order to become a faithful evangelical laborer, and thereby secure his salvation and promote that of his neighbor. He was, as I have told you, engaged in those good works with great ardor and success, when it pleased God to afflict him with a fever. He grew delirious on the seventh day of his illness, and, the fifteenth brought him, we have reason to believe, the possession of his God forever !”

The Missionaries, who survived Father John David, labored together, amid the crowd of sick and destitute at Étampes, Lagny and Palaisau. Many of those Apostolic men contracted serious maladies amid incessant labors for the poor and at the bedside of the dying.

One of them, Delafosse, was carried back to St. Lazare's on a litter. Francis Labbé and Edmund Deschamps were, at the generous invitation of the President de Lamoignon, conveyed to the Castle de Basville in the vicinity of Étampes.

Father Deschamps died there. He was a noble Missionary who, the previous year, had devoted himself at Rethel whither he had been sent by St. Vincent de Paul to the aid and consolation of the ruined population and to the interment of the dead on the battlefield. Over fifteen hundred dead bodies were left there to be devoured by dogs and wolves, objects of horror and infection. He had fulfilled his mission with intelligence and piety. He sent an account of it to St. Vincent de Paul.

To-day, he writes, we have literally fulfilled the Gospel precept: to love our enemies and to do them good. We attended to the burial of those who had robbed, beaten, insulted and ruined our compatriots. I consider myself highly favored in thus obeying you in a good work so highly commended in Holy Writ.

I must admit that those bodies, being scattered promiscuously over a wide tract of land, were, with diffi-

culty, collected. A thaw came on when our work was nearing its close, and occasioned some inconvenience. We can now understand that God greatly favored our undertaking, in the beginning, by sending severe frost. If the work had to be done now, not a man would engage in it for a thousand crowns, although it cost us much less.

Now, those poor bodies, that are to rise one day from the dead, are buried in the bosom of mother earth, and the whole Province is grateful to all who have contributed to this work of mercy, and who will, besides, receive of God, a crown in Heaven reserved to those who consecrate their lives to works of charity."

Sent to Étampes in 1852, Father Deschamps proved, says St. Vincent, a man faithful to grace, who worked wonders amid the poor sick. His task fulfilled, he fell, we may say, on the battlefield.

Mr. de Lamoignon, who had caused him to be conveyed to his castle at Basville, near Étampes, attended his funeral. He had him buried in his own family vault; he composed an epitaph in verse and had it engraved on his tombstone. (See Collet, *Life of St. Vincent de Paul*, Book V.)

Rev. Nicholas Gondree.

MADAGASCAR, May 6, 1649.

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 Father Nicholas Gondrée was born in 1820 at As-signy, a small village in the county of Eu, diocese of Amiens. He entered the Congregation of the Mission April 11, 1644; having already received sub-deaconship. After making his novitiate, during which time he was made deacon, he was sent to the House of Saintes, whence he was recalled to Paris to be ordained Priest. He then learned, from the lips of St. Vincent, that divine Providence destined him to accompany Father Nacquart to sow the seeds of salvation in the island of Madagascar.

The saint, in a letter written at Paris, April, 1648, acquainted Father Nacquart with the high opinion he had conceived of Father Gondrée's virtue, in the following terms:

"Father Gondrée, whom you may remember as a cleric at Saintes, is the one destined to accompany you. He is one of the best subjects in the Congregation. He has preserved the devotion that characterized him at his entrance into the Community. He is humble, charitable, cordial and zealous. So virtuous, that I cannot find words to do justice to his excellent qualities."

"What shall I add, save that there is nothing I covet more on earth than to accompany you in place of Father Gondrée."

The latter having overtaken Father Nacquart, both left Richelieu together on the 18th April following.

Having been delayed over a month at Rochelle, awaiting the equipment of the vessel on which they were to sail; with the Bishop's permission, they spent their time catechizing, hearing confessions and rendering other like services to the poor, especially in prisons and hospitals.

May 21st, Feast of Our Lord's Ascension, the vessel upon which they had embarked, set sail. The two pious missionaries spent the early days of the voyage preparing all on board, to the number of one hundred and twenty (120), for general confessions, in order to participate in the graces and indulgences of the jubilee recently granted by our holy Father, the Pope.

Having reached Cape Verde and stopped to get a supply of fresh water, they met a vessel from Dieppe bound for St. Christopher's Islands, and extended to them the charity they had bestowed on their fellow passengers.

During the entire voyage, they exercised their ministry, as did Father Claude Dufour, whose life has already been given.

The French at Madagascar had settled in the southern extremity of the island, on the peninsula of Tholangar, where they had built a fortress and formed a settlement known as Fort Dauphin. There, Fathers Nacquart and Gondrée landed, in good health and spirits, December 4th, 1648.

The French gave them an enthusiastic welcome, and assisted most devoutly at the chanting of the *Te Deum* and the celebration of a Mass of Thanksgiving.

The first duty they fulfilled after their arrival, was to promote the spiritual welfare of the French Colonists by disposing them to gain the jubilee of which they brought them tidings from France.

They then endeavored to acquire the language of the country, in which they met great difficulties, their interpreter being unable to acquaint them with words they required to teach the mysteries of faith and to explain religious truths in a country whose people were entirely ignorant of religion.

As soon as they could attempt to converse in the strange tongue, they endeavored to instruct the islanders, whom they found extremely docile.

Father Gondrée labored like an apostle, but he succumbed ere he had well begun to till the land which God had commissioned him to cultivate. He offered up, for the same intent, his sufferings and death.

Scarcely had St. Vincent received tidings of the arrival of the two missionaries in Madagascar when he was informed of Father Gondrée's death. It was through a letter from Father Nacquart, who now remained alone in that vast isle of Africa. The following notes are extracts from a letter written in 1650, and which refer to the virtues and merits of Father Gondrée.

Most Honored Father :

Your blessing, if you please.

The memory of the just shall live forever.

The least I can now do to commemorate my dear brother and companion, the late Father Gondrée, is to send you the details of his last hours, and touch upon the virtues which he practised during the illness that snatched him from me in the spring-tide of his existence, when I relied so much upon his pious labors.

This will be a sample, as it were, of the praise accorded him in the conference that will be held upon his life and death, that you may have some reliable information concerning his last actions, the crown and complement of all that preceded them.

I will not here tell of the virtues which he practised, on the way, at Rochelle and during the sea-voyage which covered a period of six and a half months. He exercised the virtues of a true missionary, humility, mortification, charity, meekness, simplicity and zeal. He lost no opportunity of practising them; and the greatest amount of good that has been accomplished in this place was performed by him during his six months sojourn, as you have learned from the journal I sent you. But, passing over, for the present, his piety, modesty, amiable converse, exactness and care in serving and instructing both the French and the negroes, on every available opportunity, I proceed to the first journey which he undertook to Fanshère with the Governor of Fort Dauphin, Mr. de Flacourt, to the court of Andian-Ramache, who is King of that region and in whose territory our house is situated. It was the Friday before Rogation days; I requested Father Gondrée to go because I had been there twice.

On Sunday, being unable to say Mass, he offered public prayers together with the French colonists who had accompanied Mr. Flacourt. These prayers were recited in front of the King's dwelling. The King and

several negroes attended in profound silence, and his majesty renewed his promise to perform his Christian duties when a church and priests would be established in that vicinity. The journey was made during the days of abstinence. As there is no means of procuring fish and vegetables as in France, and Mr. Gondrée wished to comply with the precept of the Church, although all the French in those parts are dispensed, he ate but a little rice boiled in water. Fatigue and the intense heat produced a severe illness from which he never recovered."

This was the crucible in which God refined the gold; and the sick man's patience was proved by infirmities.

Wednesday, the eve of Ascension Day, although in great suffering, Father Gondrée desired to celebrate Mass. It was difficult for him to finish it, but he afterwards went to hear the confession of a Frenchman, who was dying and who had sent for him. He told me that dreams tormented him the whole night. Among others, he dreamed he was making a great many crosses, which made him think that a heavy one was in store for himself.

I inquired into the cause of his illness; he told me it was partially an effect of the journey, and that when he entered our dwelling, he remarked that the atmosphere was infected. A sick man had just been removed from his apartment, and, from that time, he suffered from nausea. A high fever supervening, he became delirious. As soon as reason returned, he desired to make his confession.

The next day, he relapsed into fever. He declared that never before had he suffered pains so acute. Nevertheless, the only words that escaped his lips were: "God be blessed—May He be glorified." "If it be thy will, O, Lord, that I suffer, I am content; but if Thou dost augment my pains, increase my patience." And when I would say to him, "Courage, my dear Brother, Our good Master sees your suffering. He is trying

APPENDIX.

xlv

you in the fire of this fever." Is it not better, as the Lenten prayer says, *to suffer in the body, in time, than to be punished for all eternity?*" "You are right," he would answer. "Oh, how good God is." How much He loves me. "I am not worthy to suffer for His love."

Fortunately, I procured oil manufactured by the negroes, which afforded him some relief. Then he never wearied thanking his Creator, but the relief was not permanent; the pains returned and left him no repose.

I asked him if he could repeat the words of the Psalm, "To Thee, O, my God, do I watch from break of day." He answered, "I can say, too, 'from the nightfall.'"

Perceiving that the fever continued and that he was fast sinking, I told him, the day after the Feast of the Ascension, that he should resign himself into the hands of God and have recourse to the last Sacraments, which are the divine remedies, when the art of man fails."

"Willingly," he answered, "I leave that entirely to you." He was so ready to take advice! Preferring to anticipate, rather than defer unduly, I brought our Lord to him, in the presence of many of our French colonists, who desired to accompany the Blessed Sacrament. I said to him with a heart deeply touched and in faltering tones:

"My dear Brother, behold the great physician of soul and body who deigns to visit you—now practise that which you have so often recommended to the sick," make acts of faith, humility, contrition and charity." "I desire so to do," said he. "May the Lord do with me according to His will; I am entirely His." He then received with great devotion. His strength continued to decline. But his mind seemed to gather energy to converse more intimately with God, by aspirations too long to be here repeated.

Nothing was spared that could contribute to the

recovery of his health, and he refused nothing that we begged him to take for the love of God.

Whit-Sunday—We had exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the Forty Hours' Devotion. I begged all present who were solicitous for the restoration of the missionary, to implore the Sacred Heart of Jesus—to grant it, if necessary. For my part, I offered up the prayer of the Apostles, "*Leave us not Orphans,*" with a double intention. On the one part, that I might not be deprived of the graces of the Holy Ghost, nor be left an orphan by the death of my spiritual Father. Hast thou not said, O Lord, woe to him that is *alone*, with no companion to excite his fervor nor lift him up, if he fall?

But after having poured out my heart in sighs and tears, and implored the preservation of a laborer, so necessary in that infidel land, I returned to my dwelling and seemed to understand that the answer to my prayer was "death!"

Weakness increased, and the sick man relapsed into delirium. Even then, all his thoughts were on piety, of saying Mass, instructing infidels. From time to time, I would help him to keep his heart united to God, by repeating verses from the Psalms or other prayers, and I reflected that it is true that the mill turns out flour according to the wheat that feeds it, and the mind naturally reverts to thoughts that usually occupy it. But he was not delirious when he said to me and others around him, "Oh! it is well to serve God when we are in health, for, believe me, it is difficult when the poor mind is clouded and cast down by bodily pains." At other times, he would exclaim very earnestly, "We appear to be wretched when the body suffers, yet it is really a great happiness to endure pain for the love of God. A momentary tribulation worketh an eternal weight of glory."

After he had relapsed into delirium, he remembered the Protestants who accompanied the first Governor of

the colony, Mr. de Pronis, and he whispered: "How shall we convert those Huguenots?" I answered him: "By meekness and humility." It is worthy of remark, that shortly after his decease, five of the ten who were then living in this place, were successively converted, attracted by kindness.

I may be mistaken, in supposing that his mind wandered when he mentioned the Huguenots. It may be, that he was then offering a prayer for them, which was at that moment accepted, though not visibly answered for some days later.

On the Feast of Pentecost, I enquired if he did not desire to receive again, Him who sent down His Holy Spirit on the Apostles. "Oh! yes," he answered. But my many and constant engagements that day, prevented me from carrying the Blessed Sacrament to him until the following morning, when he received with the same devotion as on the first day. As nearly all the French colonists were present, he most earnestly recommended to them, devotion to the Blessed Virgin. It was difficult for him to articulate, and he begged me to add my exhortations to his.

I must here remark his own great devotion to the Mother of God. It was so fervent, that I find among his writings many practices of piety in her honor, adopted, I believe, during his retreats. He appeared to have made an agreement with three or four seminarians to speak of her in their recreations and make her the subject of their spiritual colloquies. After he had communicated, I recommended him to receive Extreme Unction. Hoping more from its effects, even on the body, than from medicine. He received it with so much devotion, presenting his limbs to be anointed and answering the prayers so fervently, that I could not refrain from weeping and all present mingled their tears with mine.

Having anointed him, I went to celebrate Mass and baptize a young girl who was about to marry a negro

who had been baptized at Nantes; the comrade of one who was baptized at Paris. The latter shortly afterwards married a negress whom I baptized.

On my return from church, having no consoling news to impart to my confrère, languid and on the brink of the grave, I told him how I had been engaged. "Well, dear friend," said I, "we have just begun our Lord's work by baptizing a young woman. I will soon baptize another who is under instruction. Are you not very glad?" "Ah! who would not be glad," said he. "Were we not sent hither for such work? My deepest regret, at present, would be to leave those poor people whose good dispositions are so manifest. O, my God! how great an honor! And, wilt thou not grant me the grace of serving thee in this way?"

These sentiments of zeal for the salvation of the natives can be better imagined than expressed, for he often entertained me with them even in the days of his health. He never spoke of our mission in this country but with tears and expressions of heartfelt gratitude to God for the honor conferred upon us. The mere memory of his devotion calls tears from my eyes whilst I write, and I feel the deepest confusion for my tepidity in the discharge of my duty.

After the touching words I have cited he fell into a stupor, during which he continued to express his desire for the conversion of infidels. And, as if he were studying the language, he would mutter in his ravings, "Yes, that is the right word!" Then, as if suddenly awakened, he would exclaim: "Yes, gentlemen, I take you to witness, that if I left all, in leaving France, and traveled six thousand leagues by sea to reach this place under many difficulties, it was solely for the conversion of these poor people."

I told him that we had begun to cultivate the land, and that having sown the good seed the Harvest would ripen in our Lord's good time. "Yes," answered he, "but that is a long time coming." "What!" said I,

“do you think that those who do all that depends on them to prepare the way for the future, as we are doing, shall have less reward than those who will make greater progress because the way has been prepared for them?”

Towards the last of those feast days, I saw that he must soon sink under the violence of the fever that was undermining life for the last fortnight. The heat and excessive pain in head and limbs were fast consuming his poor frame.

I said to him, “Should it please God to recall you from this exile, what shall I say for you to our good Father, Mr. Vincent?”

“Tell him that I thank him most humbly for having admitted me and suffered me to remain among the Missionaries, particularly for having selected me for this country instead of many others who would have fulfilled their duty so much better than I.”

“What message do you send Father Lambert and the whole seminary?”

“Ask them to thank God for the same intentions!”

“And to you, mother and sisters?”

“I beg then to have a great many masses offered for me for the same intentions.”

“And, if you leave me here, all alone, what do you devise to me by your will?”

“He asked me if I would not say a great many masses for him.”

“Yes,” said I, “certainly, of that you are assured.”

“You will pray for me, above, and I for you, here below.” “And, when death shall have separated us in body, it shall not separate our hearts, ever strongly united in the one design of serving God and leading others to His service.”

After a few moments’ reflection he said to me, in presence of two or three of our compatriots: “As my testament, I warn you that you will have much to suffer here.” “Yes, much to suffer—not a little, but much.” I tell you again!”

I did not ask him why, and I was glad to carry this dear bequest in my heart, supplicating our divine Savior to do His will in me, upon me and by me, that all might turn to his glory.

I do not say that this testament has been fulfilled, for as to the corporal sufferings to be here endured, either from the heat or the want of many things that abound in France, that is not worth mentioning.

But I bless God for the grace He has granted me in enabling me to overcome much mental anguish—such as finding myself alone *in terra aliena*, the privation of the dear company of the deceased, and the prospect of being a long while bereft of the society of other confrères either to administer to us the sacraments, or to advance the work that requires diligent laborers, whilst I am alone and attending only to the French colonists.

Finally, towards evening, after Benediction, when each one felt urged to address a last petition to our Lord to cure the infirmities of him whom *He loved* and whom we all loved, I returned to his bedside. He seemed to be unconscious and I enquired if he knew me. “Yes,” he answered. “Your name is Nacquart,” and as I endeavored to excite him to cheerfulness, I asked him if he knew his own name. He answered, *a little*, and smiled, and he continued, in his humble way. I am called “a person that is not worth much.” “God be praised,” said I, “for giving you such an opinion of yourself. You will be none the less for that in His sight.”

Although his mind wandered on temporal questions, it was very clear in spiritual matters. From the depths of his humility, he soared with confidence to the throne of divine mercy, and, clasping his crucifix, he murmured, in broken accents, “Yes, God will pardon me, or I should be lost.” And if I did but touch the crucifix, he clasped it closer than ever, as if he would

say to himself: *Inveni quem diligit anima mea, tenui eum nec dimittam. I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I hold Him and I will never let Him go.*" (Cant. iii, 4.)

Foreseeing that he could not last much longer, and that I would be left, a long while, without an opportunity of being reconciled with God, I asked him if he felt able to hear my confession and pronounce the words of absolution. "Yes," said he, immediately baring his head. I had recourse to the Sacrament without any hesitation on his part, and having excited myself to contrition, he gave me his last blessing.

I remained near him to encourage him in his last moments, and he continued to pray. He turned to look at his crucifix, and after contemplating it, he uncovered his head with trembling hands. Whilst holding the image of his Divine Lord, he tried to recite the Litany of Jesus, but his memory failing him, I pronounced the invocations and he responded devoutly. I sought, however, to moderate him and induce him to take a little rest, for he was quite exhausted.

During the night, a high wind arose that disturbed the leaves of the vine that clambered over the house-top, as is usual in that hot country. Those that watched beside him, having withdrawn a little ways, often heard him repeat the words that occupied his mind from the beginning of his illness. "My God, to thee do I watch at break of day." (1.) And his crucifix being fastened to a mat beside him—he stretched out his hand towards it.

"Without doubt, that poor, trembling hand that rested so lovingly on the image of the crucified, sought those sacred wounds that St. Thomas longed to touch, and with him, he exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!"

The heart that had so tenderly loved and faithfully served the Lord and so courageously fought the good

(1) Ps. LXII, 1.

fight, beholding the term of his career approach when he thought to begin his labors in that far-off land, incited him to cry aloud: "*I desire to be dissolved and to to be with Christ.*" (1.)

The hour of dissolution and of death had indeed come; and soon I beheld only the lifeless body of him, whose soul had gone to receive the reward of his labors and the virtues he had so perfectly practised.

I leave to you to imagine the anguish of my poor heart, which shudders even as I write, and oh! what grief for me to bury that body that had served not only to confess Christ before men, but which had suffered the martyrdom of so many voluntary mortifications endured with admirable patience, particularly in that last trial that had purified him like gold in the crucible.

I cannot describe my anguish whilst attending to his funeral, chanting the office of the dead and celebrating the Holy Sacrifice.

Then, when I had consigned to the grave him whom I would wish to redeem from death at the cost of my own life! Oh! how many sobs interrupted the chanting of that office, and obliged me, towards the conclusion, to beg of those around me, who could not restrain their own tears, to pardon my weakness. I relied on the example of Jesus to excuse myself, for the like cause, when, at the resurrection of his friend Lazarus, it was said of him: "*Ecce quomodo amabat eum.*" (1) (John XI, 36.) "Behold, how he loved him!"

Not only were the French plunged in grief, but the negroes also, who were just beginning to know Father Gondrée. They were present in large numbers at his burial, weeping bitterly over the death of him of whom they were wont to say in his lifetime, they had never seen man like him who "spoke to them so affectionately on

(1) Phil. 1, 23.

APPENDIX.

liii

the affairs of their salvation and instructed them so faithfully."

Having in a few touching words referred to his own deep sorrow, Father Nacquart thus concluded his letter to St. Vincent :

I desire that the blessed heritage of suffering bequeathed me by Father Gondree be executed in my regard as a sure pledge of my election to bear unto this land and, elsewhere, the name of Him in whose love I desire to end my life, as did our dear departed, and to remain forever, my most Honored Father,

Your very humble and submissive,

NACQUART.

u. p. o. t. c. m.

St. Vincent, on being informed of Father Gondrée's death, eulogized the servant of God several times before the assembled community, and availed himself of the opportunity to exhort the Priests of the Mission to the exercise of apostolic zeal.

"O, my God, he exclaimed, what sentiments animated Father Gondrée. He seems always before me in his great meekness and remarkable modesty. I remember his kind words to us amid the confusion of his preparation for that long voyage. That man of God ! O, my Savior !"

"Now, let us implore of God to give us each and all a like heart and spirit. A heart that will find us ready to go anywhere and everywhere for the conversion of nations."

Oh ! gentlemen, when we think of those dear departed laborers, who does not desire to take their place and to die like them ! Is there anything more desirable ? Let us not cling to anything here below. Courage ! Let us go wheresoever God may call us ! Let us all pray for this intention !"

Rev. Julien Guerin, C. M.

TUNIS, May 13, 1648.

Tunis, a seaport town, situated at the extremity of a Bay of the same name in the Mediterranean, was, for a long time, like Algeria, a resort for pirates, who went thither to dispose of their piracies.

From the days of his own captivity in that city, St. Vincent had never lost sight of the poor Christian slaves who shared his lot, and whom he had promised himself to assist by every means with which Providence would favor him. But, for a long while, he had to be content with praying for them.

It was indeed a difficult task ; the Turks could endure the presence of a Christian Priest only in quality of slave or tributary.

St. Vincent had learned, from the studies of treaties drawn up between the King of France and the Grand Signor, that our monarchs were authorized to maintain in all seaport towns, depending upon the Ottoman Port, some subject with the title of consul, and that the consuls should receive a chaplain and maintain him for the religious services of the consulate. The Kings of France had availed themselves, in part, of this privilege in the interests of commerce and of Christian slaves in the principal maritime cities of the Levant and of Barbary. St. Vincent resolved to avail himself of these opportunities.

To oblige himself, in a measure, to convey prompt assistance to slaves in the Barbary States, he requested that in the contract of the foundation made by the Duchess of Aiguillon for a permanent mission among the galleys of Marseille, there should be special mention made of sending Priests of the Mission to the coast of Africa. The agreement was made and the charge was imposed upon his congregation. The fund, nevertheless, was far from sufficient for the two works, and the charity of St. Vincent de Paul made him

APPENDIX.

lv

anxious to procure means to begin the Mission of Barbary, confident that divine Providence would come to his aid. Nine or ten thousand livres that the pious King, Louis XIII, remitted to him about that time, persuaded him not to delay, but to send missionaries to Tunis by the earliest opportunity. Louis XIII died soon afterwards, and the opportunity did not present itself for two years.

The authorization from Rome having reached him, the holy founder of the mission wrote to Lange Martin, Consul of France at Tunis, to inquire if he would be pleased to receive, into his establishment, a missionary in quality of chaplain; adding, that neither the priest, nor the brother coadjutor, who would accompany him, should be any expense to the consul. Having received a favorable answer, he sent Rev. Julien Guérin and Coadjutor Brother, Francis Francillon.

Providence destined Brother Francillon to crown with martyrdom, his half century of labors on African soil. We here cite the preparation and labors of Rev. Julien Guérin at the mission of Tunis.

1.

Julien Guérin, born in the year 1605, in the parish of Selles, diocess of Bayeux, was received into the Congregation of the Mission, Jan. 30, 1640.

God, who called him to a high degree of sanctity, and who designed to make of him an instrument of salvation for many souls, gave him excellent parents, who afforded him a most christian education.

In his early youth, he chose the military career. Despite the dangers inherent to that profession, he persevered in the path of virtue by faithfully observing the pious practices to which he had been trained by his parents.

He not only avoided duelling, blasphemy and other excesses so common among military men, but his example and advice were most useful to many of his com-

panions who, impressed by his edifying deportment, trampled upon human respect and persevered in, or, returned to the path of duty.

His soul was filled with liveliest gratitude when he remembered God's great mercy in protecting him amidst the many snares that surrounded him. And he loved to repeat, in his humility, that, when he was young and the most wicked of men, God inspired him with the desire and granted him the grace of always opposing sin and the offences committed against the Divine Majesty.

On his discharge from military service he entered the ecclesiastical state, and accepted the curacy of St. Mamens, which his elder brother resigned to him. This brother, wishing to devote himself exclusively to the work of his sanctification, entered the Congregation of the Mission. His resolution produced a deep impression upon Father Julian Guérin and urged him to follow his brother's example. Three months later, he resigned his curacy, sold all he possessed, distributed the money among the poor, and he, too, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, entered St. Vincent's family.

He fervently followed all the exercises of the Seminary, neglecting none as trivial. Above all, he cultivated the virtues of humility and mortification. In a spirit of obedience, he obeyed the first indication of his Superiors' will. Knowing the value of purity of intention in actions seemingly indifferent, he was careful to walk constantly in the divine presence. This practice was of great utility in helping him to correct a certain vivacity and excessive eagerness that might lead him astray and impair his zeal for the conversion of souls.

For many years, St. Vincent sought by bountiful alms to mitigate the frightful misfortunes that desolated Lorraine; and in 1641, he sent Father Guérin to the help of the priests in that province. The holy priest was most happy to be employed in the charitable

APPENDIX.

lvii

work of ministering to the poor people in their dire necessity.

Not content with distributing help to those who had recourse to his charity, he sought out the most abandoned, assembled them in some humble cottage where, after having distributed to them the bread of the divine word, he gave them alms as abundant as his means would permit, mingling his tears with theirs. Then he proceeded from house to house visiting the sick, giving them food with great gentleness and cordiality. The visitation ended, he returned to his poor, whom he loved as his own children. This exercise of charity, practised throughout a number of parishes, attracted the attention, admiration and gratitude of the whole country, and St. Vincent said of Father Guérin, nothing could be added, nothing more could be desired after his labors, so faithfully did he discharge them.

The excessive fatigue resulting from his multiplied labors told notably upon his health. To prolong the days of so skilful a laborer, he was recalled to Paris, and shortly afterwards sent to Richelieu, where he made his vows June 14, 1642.

When he had recruited, St. Vincent sent him to the establishment at Saintes. From the time of his arrival there, he exercised the same charity as at Lorraine, giving special attention to prisoners whom he visited, fed and clothed, instructing them in the truths of our holy religion and teaching them to love it, so that, when restored to liberty, they would conform their lives to its divine precepts.

Frequently, touched by the repentance of some among them—and learning that the detention of others, left their families without support; he managed to cancel their debts and restore them to liberty. His tender charity for those poor unfortunates, sustained by incontestable proofs, triumphed over the opposition of the hardest hearts, as appears in the following circumstance :

A prisoner, condemned to death, obstinately refused the succors of religion.

On his way to the place of punishment, he suddenly remembered the kindness with which Father Guérin had always treated him. He could not resist the thought, and begged to be assisted by Father Guérin at his last moments. The first Priest of the Mission, whom the messenger met, was hastily summoned. But the poor doomed man, not recognizing in him his benefactor, could not make up his mind to apply to him. It was absolutely necessary for him to speak to Father Guérin. The latter, having made all haste, met the criminal just as he was about to ascend the scaffold, exhorted him to confidence in God, to sincere sorrow for his sins, and so efficacious were his words, that all were edified at the happy end of the poor criminal.

The charity that seasoned his words, made his exhortations irresistible.

There were, however, at Saintes, two young women who often deceived him by their false promises.

One day, that he urged them more strongly than ever to serve God more generously, they cut short the conversation and ordered him to leave the house. Father Guérin withdrew without the least sign of displeasure. But, understanding that these proceedings were signs of the conflict between grace and corrupt nature that disturbed their hearts, he paid them another visit. In fact, a few days later, his patience and gentleness so impressed them that they resolved upon leading more Christian lives.

This meekness was, in our holy missionary, allied to remarkable courage. Once in his travels, he was assailed by a band of robbers, who, pistols in hand, cried out: "Qui vive!" threatening to shoot him if he made the least resistance. Father Guérin, without the least trepidation, held up his Crucifix and exclaimed:

“Vive Jesus! whose image I here present you!” Surprised and disconcerted, the robbers allowed him to pursue his way unmolested.

Zeal gave him a great attraction for labors whose immediate aim was the salvation of souls. To gain hearts to Jesus Christ he eagerly availed himself of every opportunity to make Him known and loved.

A lady of quality having fallen dangerously ill sent for him to attend her in her last moments. He profited by the time he spent in her house to catechize her family. God so blessed his instructions that the family, appreciating the blessing of a sincere return to the practice of their religious duties, entreated him, most earnestly, to give a mission on their estate. He willingly acceded to their request, and having agreed upon the time, he and one coadjutor Brother began the holy exercises. He preached so efficaciously that the days were not long enough for the confessions; he was obliged to spend five or six nights, consecutively, in the tribunal of penance. One of the parishioners asked him how he could sustain so great labors and fatigues without taking adequate repose and nourishment. His answer was, “Do you believe that God fails to supply by other means, the corporal necessities of which we deprive ourselves for the spiritual benefit of our neighbor?” His entire application to the salvation of souls gave him to understand the importance of prayer, not only for the attainment of his own perfection, but in order to derive, from his communings with God, sentiments which he designed to excite in the hearts of his auditors. After his prayer, abandoning himself to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, his words had a power and unction that inflamed all hearts. Ever ready to fulfil the duties assigned him in holy obedience, he yet experienced a vehement desire to engage in missionary labors. His joy manifested itself in abundant tears when he was sent to evangelize poor country people.

If confined to his room by indisposition, the very thought that he was about to engage in a mission, appeared to restore his health and energy. Whenever there was question of gaining souls to God he was ready.

When some appeared surprised at the remarkable change, and struck with the courage and zeal he displayed throughout the course of a mission, he would remark: "I can see nothing wonderful in it. All these labors are undertaken for the salvation of souls redeemed by the blood of our Divine Master. My only aim is to co-operate in the salvation of those poor souls."

His humility and tender compassion for the most abandoned sinners had long made him aspire to the favor of ministering to christian captives, or at least of serving the galley slaves, if he were deemed unworthy of the former duty.

Having been told that perhaps he would be sent to Barbary, "O, my Savior, shall I ever merit so great a favor? I am too unworthy; such favors are not for wretched sinners like me."

This persuasion of his own unworthiness was that, perhaps, which inclined God to grant his fervent desire.

St. Vincent, bearing in mind the testimony of the Bishop of Saintes, relative to the pious missionary, that "he knew no one more highly endowed with the apostolic spirit than Father Guerin"—and, continuing to receive most favorable accounts of him, thought that the hour appointed by divine providence had arrived at last, and he decided upon sending him to Tunis. This news filled the heart of the new apostle with joy so great, that he seemed like one about to celebrate a great triumph, rather than a man exposed to imminent danger of death.

When, shortly before his departure, some one told him that he ran the risk of being empaled or blown up

APPENDIX.

lxi

at the cannon's mouth, he answered, "That is too little; my consolation is, that I hope to suffer much more." He endured less, and yet more; an obscure death, it is true, but a veritable martyrdom in the service of charity.

II

On his arrival at Tunis, the missionary found the poor church in a sad condition temporally, although it had been erected into an apostolic prefecture.

From the moment of his landing, Father Guérin devoted himself unreservedly to the spiritual benefit of the slaves. By his gentle words, affable manners, tender interest, and the alms which he dispensed seasonably and prudently, he soon gained their hearts and calmed their despair. He spoke to them of God and, after due preparation, disposed them to have recourse to the sacraments and to practise their religion.

Everything proceeded secretly, at first, but he was soon able to observe the ceremonials of the church and some exterior pomp in the divine services. The bagnios were transformed into so many humble temples, in which the slaves could freely and publicly assist at the Holy Sacrifice. Jesus dwelt, day and night, in the tabernacle amid the objects of his eternal predilection, the poor and the afflicted. And a lamp burned continually in the Divine Presence, symbol of the faith of those poor slaves and of Christ's watchful providence. When He was conveyed to the sick, the attendants carried torches or tapers.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, He was carried in procession, followed by a crowd whose chains and tattered garments formed, to Christian eyes, a glorious triumph; and, during the whole Octave, He was exposed to public veneration.

Sundays and holy days, the divine offices were celebrated with less pomp, but with as much solemnity as in Paris.

Pious endowments were often made, to which the slaves contributed their mite; and confraternities were established in honor of the Blessed Virgin and for the relief of the dying and the dead.

In a word, on that infidel land were fulfilled the words of the prophet, "The Lord said to my Lord, reign thou, and triumph in the midst of thy enemies."

Annually, the Feast of St. Louis, Patron of the Chapel and Protector of that Land of Tunis, which he sanctified by his death, was celebrated with great pomp, and the King and France were specially remembered. "You would be delighted, Father Guérin wrote to St. Vincent, to hear in our churches and chapels on Sundays and festivals, the *Exaudiat* and other prayers sung for the King of France, for whom even foreigners entertain esteem and affection. You would be greatly edified to note with what affection our poor captives pray for all their benefactors, most of whom are French, or who come from France."

"It is indeed no small consolation to see those poor captives, of almost every nation, in irons and chains praying to God for France." Father Guerin's condescension, meekness, tender compassion, and indefatigable zeal, which the most repulsive miseries could not disgust or weary, caused him to be looked upon as an angel descended from Heaven.

By his patience and persevering courage, he banished abuses considered inveterate, even in spite of obstacles thrown in his way by certain ecclesiastics among the slaves, whose lives in no manner corresponded with the holiness of their calling. By his longanimity, patience and wise counsels, he gained the affection of those very Priests, recalled them to duty, and made, of many of them, useful auxiliaries in his ministrations to their companions in misery.

At different epochs, under certain circumstances, the piety of the slaves increased, and the labors of the mis-

APPENDIX.

lxiii

sionaries were redoubled, for instance, during the devotion of the "Forty Hours," and above all at the time of the jubilee. Then occurred admirable conversions after long years of neglect of religious duties and practices.

Even Apostates made the abjuration of their errors with heroic courage and at the peril of their lives. Then, whole nights were often spent in hearing confessions, because the masters refused their slaves permission to desist from their labors even for a few moments.

The missionary was sustained in his arduous labors, at sight of the marvellous effects of grace wrought through his ministry. There, Christian captives vied with the primitive Christians in heroism, and St. Cyprian might, as in his own times, have eulogized those confessors and martyrs of the faith.

The first who, at that period, fertilized the soil with his blood, was a Portuguese only twenty-two (22) years of age, whose history we here introduce.

Antoninus de la Paix, little favored by fortune, was rich in faith. Having embarked on a small trading vessel, he fell into the hands of a Tunisian Corsair. At that time, he was but nineteen years of age. He was taken to Tunis and sold to a Turk. Divine Providence permitted this to happen, to afford, in his person, an example of the firmest faith, the rarest patience and the most heroic chastity.

Antonin was in his master's house like another Joseph in the House of Putiphar. The early months of his captivity were spent in comparative tranquillity, diligent, attentive to his duties, obedient to his masters, full of kindness and attention when he could oblige them, he soothed by degrees his master's harshness. That master, struck by his slave's fidelity, gave him marks of confidence. The master's wife likewise showed a preference for Antoninus, who mistrusted

her attentions and shielded himself from danger by increased reserve. The woman sought to avenge herself by a series of persecutions. Her continual complaints soon exasperated her husband against Antoninus, who had to endure reprimands and chastisements. The holy youth bore all ill-usage with the most perfect resignation and entire confidence in God.

One day the perverse woman happening to be alone with him, uttered the most piercing cries; the domestics hastening to the room, found her in a state of desperation, tearing her hair, bruising her face and accusing Antoninus of having assaulted her. The husband, listening too credulously to his wife's calumnies, was about to plunge a dagger into the heart of Antoninus, but remembering his many services, and hitherto, blameless life, he paused; willing to submit to fair investigation, the charges laid against him. He could learn nothing from his servants; but the wife's account was most damaging to Antoninus. No longer doubting his guilt, he had him loaded with chains and went to the Bey to lodge the terrible charge against him, demanding summary and inexorable justice. The Bey promised to attend to the affair and sent an officer to seize the accused, who was imprisoned.

The Lord who watched over the salvation of so pure and innocent a soul, raised up one of His angels in the person of Father Guérin, who had been a resident of Tunis for more than a year, and who brought the pious captive the consolation and succor he required. Informed of all that had taken place, the missionary presented himself at the prison gate. The fierce aspect of the guards led him to anticipate that difficulties awaited him.

He had scarce spoken, however, when he was permitted to pass on. At the second gate, the jailer admitted him without hesitation and he penetrated into

the deep and dark dungeon in which Antoninus was confined.

Antoninus, hearing his name called, thought that his last hour had come, and that he was about to be dragged from his prison to the place of execution. But, reassured by the compassionate tones of that voice, he was doubly relieved when he recognized Father Guérin. Joy succeeded fear and he was unable to express his lively gratitude for the opportune charity of the holy missionary.

Father Guérin, beholding that martyr of faith and of virginity with his feet in wooden stocks, his hands manacled and chains around his neck and body, could not suppress his tears. Approaching the youth with respect, he devoutly kissed his chains and exclaimed: "Courage, my son; blessed is the mother who gave thee birth and taught thee to combat so bravely against the enemies of salvation! More blessed still art thou, to have been found worthy to suffer for the name of Christ and for His holy law. He is thy Redeemer. His adorable blood is the price of thy ransom! Mayst thou generously persevere to the end!"

Antoninus, fortified by the words of Christ's minister, declared his desire to remain faithful to God. Then he made his confession with fervent piety and unbounded confidence in the divine mercy. After confession, he had the happiness to receive the "Bread of the Strong," which he had not dared to expect.

This fresh favor filled him with consolation and unbounded gratitude.

After addressing a few words to him, Father Guérin, at the repeated request of the jailor, left this holy confessor of the faith, promising to return the next day. The fourth day, the *mezouard* (executioner), followed by his assistants, came to the prison. Father Guérin had preceded him and the generous martyr confessed once more. The Lord so disposing the hearts of those

barbarians, they permitted the missionary to accompany Antoninus to the place of execution, a favor that had not been granted to any one else.

Although Father Guérin does not mention the manner of death inflicted on the holy youth, it is presumable that he was either burned to death or empaled, such being the ordinary modes of execution.

Antoninus having reached the place of doom, surveyed unappalled the instruments of death. As firm and constant under those cruel tortures, as he had been under the bastinadoes to which he had been subjected, no word of complaint nor sign of impatience escaped him. "I am a Christian," said he, "the Holy Roman Church is my mother." "And despite the efforts of my enemies and of hell, I will die in her bosom!" His last words were: "O, God! I am a Christian and I die innocent!"

These words produced so great an impression on the master of the heroic youth, that he bitterly regretted having brought about his death. Convinced of his slave's innocence and of his wife's infidelity, he thought only of avenging himself on the latter. Returning to his home, he caused her to be strangled.

After this species of reparation to martyred innocence, the slaves were permitted to remove his body; they placed it devoutly in a wooden chest, laid a fresh culled rose upon his lips and conveyed his remains in triumph to the little chapel of the French Consul.

The obsequies, conducted by Father Guérin and attended by all the slaves, were magnificent. Interred outside the city, in consecrated ground, Antoninus reposes in the peace of the Lord, awaiting the great day of the general Resurrection when it shall be granted him to contemplate his God forever!

All the slaves revered him as a saint. Father Guérin shared their sentiments; the witness of his combats and his victories, full of confidence in his

APPENDIX.

lxvii

merits, he implored his aid in all the difficulties inseparable from the duties of the holy ministry so multiplied on that land of malediction.

He wrote to St. Vincent August, 1646 : “ I loved him on earth, and he loved me.” “ Can he cease to love me in Heaven ? ”

IV.

Sometime afterwards, a young Frenchman was impaled for having refused to lend himself to the gratification of an infamous passion.

At his cruel and ignominious execution the roles were reversed; whilst he remained intrepid, some of his executioners took to flight, and the others, whilst at the cruel work, shook like leaves.

One may form some idea of the dangers and assaults to which the virtue of women was exposed, especially, if they were young and beautiful. Therefore, Father Guérin, with the concurrence of some Christian merchants, recoiled from no sacrifice to snatch them from the power of their infamous masters, especially if the masters were renegades. When unable to collect the sum stipulated for their ransom, he sometimes secured a delay, during which interval he had them conveyed to a place of security, sheltered from guilty pursuit. But from time to time their asylum was discovered, and the poor refugees were subjected to the most cruel tortures to force them to abjure faith and virtue. One of them received, on one day, five hundred lashes, and her bruised body was trampled under foot by the barbarians, who consummated her martyrdom by cutting off her breasts. Father Guérin, on hearing those sad accounts, redoubled his efforts to secure the ransom of those wretched captives. When he succeeded, he hastened to conclude agreements with the slave-holders, and obtain written certificates of the freedom purchased, which enabled him to remove the redeemed at once; for, among those brutal men one had to take precautions

against their insatiate passions and find secure shelter from pursuit.

Father Guérin was no less solicitous to ransom boys who were exposed to deny their faith, or minister to vile caprices.

Once he saved a Marseillais thirteen years old, who had already received one thousand blows for refusing to deny Jesus Christ. After which, they dislocated his arm and condemned him to four hundred more stripes; he had only to choose between death and apostasy. Hearing of this, Father Guérin hastened to the master and cast himself three or four times with clasped hands at the master's feet; finally he succeeded in redeeming the child at the price of two hundred dollars.

By these efforts and sacrifices, Father Guérin not only sustained Catholics in fidelity to the church and virtue, but he brought back to the true fold many Protestants. In a letter to St. Vincent, June, 1646, he tells of the conversion of an English boy eleven years old.

Seized by pirates on the coast of his native land, he was conveyed by them to Tunis and there sold. At that tender age, he had learned the true faith by the double light of adversity and grace; having been instructed in the truth, he abjured error. The missionary wrote: "He was a child of wonderful beauty and a most fervent Christian. His fervor seemed to gather strength from tortures the master inflicted to force him to abjure the faith. 'Strike!' he would exclaim, strike! 'Cut off my head, if you will,' 'but know that I am now, and I will die a Christian, a Catholic!'"

"Rest assured, Father," said he, turning to Father Guérin, "I have resolved to suffer, even unto death, rather than renounce my Saviour!"

Transported with admiration, Father Guérin had but one regret, his inability to collect two hundred dollars for the boy's ransom. "He would have been a second Bede to his fatherland," wrote Father Guérin, so remarkable were his intelligence and virtue."

APPENDIX.

lxix

Father Guérin's tender solicitude was not confined to the slaves in the city. His heart followed them wherever they were led, on sea or land; of this we may judge by his words to St. Vincent.

"We expect a great many sick when the galleys return. If those poor men suffer on the sea, they who remain here, suffer no less. They are forced to cut marble all day, exposed to the sun's burning rays; so intense is the heat that I can compare it to nothing but a fiery furnace. The labor and excessive heat they endure is something most wonderful. The climate is enough to kill horses, yet those poor Christians live on, losing only flesh which is a prey to devouring heat. Their tongues hang out like the tongues of dogs; the hot air they must inhale is unsupportable. Yesterday a poor, very aged slave, overcome by suffering, begged to be permitted to rest awhile. The answer was: "that he must work until he dropped." "I leave you to imagine how deeply this cruelty afflicts my heart." Yet those poor slaves endure their trials with incredible patience, and bless God amid the terrible torments inflicted upon them. And I can assert, in all sincerity, that our compatriots surpass all other nations in kindness and virtue. Two of them are now seriously ill, leaving us no hopes of their recovery, we have given them the last sacraments. Last week two died in the most beautiful dispositions. We may truly say that their death was precious in the sight of the Lord. The compassion I feel for those poor creatures who are engaged in marble cutting, obliges me to share with them the refreshments destined for the sick."

Even the Mohammedans, struck with the constant self-sacrifice of Father Guérin, were deeply touched, and conceived the highest esteem for the religion that inspired him. Many desired to embrace our holy faith. But Father Guérin had to act with consummate prudence, so as not to compromise, in one instant, a

work of beautiful promise for the salvation of souls, but one which had already been blessed with most consoling results.

Among the Mohammedans who presented themselves for instruction was a son of Agy Mahomet, Bey of Tunis, named Cheruby. This prince attended the Missionary's instructions at nightfall, and was soon sufficiently familiar with the truths of faith to receive Baptism, after which he escaped secretly with three slaves. The fugitives directed their steps to Palermo which, at that time, was subject to Spain. Thence they proceeded to Madrid. Cheruby chose that country in preference to France, because it was nearer Tunis. He wished, too, to prevent the suspicion that the French Missionary had favored his departure, and to shield his fellow Christians from his father's wrath and Mussulman fanaticism.

Agy Mahomet, on learning his son's departure, was enraged and made no secret of his feelings to those around him. He caused a young Christian slave, whom, it was reported, Cheruby had espoused, to be put to death.

Prudence counseled Father Guérin to keep in the back-ground and even to discontinue, for a while, his charities to the slaves.

We learn by a letter of St. Vincent, bearing date July 25, 1646, that the zealous missionary had just escaped a great danger—that he had been forced to hide during an entire month, expecting from hour to hour to be seized and burned to death—for which alternative he was ready; he had long and earnestly desired martyrdom. At the end of that month, he was summoned to appear before the Bey, who suspected him of having favored his son's departure.

But the missionary answered all his interrogatories so candidly and with so much presence of mind that the Bey was satisfied, and gave him full authority to visit Christian slaves wherever he desired.

APPENDIX.

lxxi

Father Guérin, enjoying more fully than ever the favor of Agy Mohammed, availed himself of it to request the Bey to authorize him to apply for an assistant priest, as he could no longer suffice for his daily increasing task. "Two or three if you want them," answered the barbarian, "I will always protect you and them. I will refuse you nothing; I am aware that you injure no one; on the contrary, you do good to every one!"

Always having in view the interests of France and of the faith, Father Guérin even succeeded in obtaining a letter for young Louis XIV, which I have here, wrote St. Vincent, but we cannot find an interpreter.

In this letter the Bey, among other things, thanked the King of France for sending him Father Guérin, a man so upright and worthy of his confidence. The missionary did not delay to inform St. Vincent of the favorable manner in which his request had been received. And the Saint immediately sent to his aid Father John Le Vacher who was, in after years, blown up at the cannon's mouth by the Mussulmans in Algeria.

VI.

Notwithstanding his many labors, Tunis and its environs did not present a field vast enough for the exercise of Father Guérin's zeal.

From time to time, he made excursions along the coasts, or penetrated deeper into the country to console the most abandoned slaves. Once he went as far as Biserte (Ancient Utica), where he learned that two galleys from Algeria had arrived.

The information was received on Easter Sunday. He started immediately. The voyage was rough; for having refused an escort of Janissaries, he was met by Arabs, who loaded him with blows. One of them seized him by the throat and almost strangled him. "But I am so miserable a sinner," he wrote, in his ever

frustrated desire of martyrdom, "that the Lord did not deem me worthy to die in His service."

Having reached Biserte, he found over four hundred Christian slaves in a most pitiful condition. The mere sight of them filled the missionary's heart with paternal compassion.

He embraced them tenderly and kissed their chains. He was most happy to give them the food that had been prepared for himself. Those poor unfortunates, the objects of so much tenderness, cordiality and attention from a stranger, could not suppress their tears, and were ready to do whatever the good missionary desired. After providing for their most urgent corporeal necessities, Father Guérin concerned himself for their souls' salvation, and, with the Master's consent, he, aided by the Priest who accompanied him, gave them a ten days' mission.

He obtained for them the precious satisfaction of landing every day, unshackled by chains, to hear Mass in a private house, which was, for the time being, transformed into a private chapel.

All, with the exception of some Greek schismatics, hastened to make a general confession, and to approach the Holy Table, from which a good number had been excluded for eight, ten and even twenty years. Such a sight edified even the Turks, who in their compassion and admiration, ran to kiss the missionary's hand whenever he passed near them.

These holy exercises were concluded by a Christian Agape, at which Father Guérin collected all the poor slaves, gave them the kiss of peace and a kind farewell.

After the departure of the galley slaves, the missionary asked the host of whom they had received hospitality, to present his account, but he would accept of no remuneration, saying: "Priest, go in peace, the charity that you exercise towards others justly merits that it should, in turn, be practised in your regard."

Touching words from the lips of a barbarian and infidel. Well calculated to bring the blush of shame to the cheek of many a disciple of Him who is called all love and charity.

In this connection, we read in another letter of Father Guérin, addressed to his venerable father, St. Vincent de Paul:

“I cannot help telling you what a Turk said to me not long ago, to the confusion of bad christians.”

I was endeavoring to reconcile two men who were at enmity; perceiving that we had a difficulty in reconciling them, he said to me in their presence, but in his own language:

“Father, among us Turks we are not permitted to entertain ill-will against our neighbor three days—though he kill our nearest relative.”

In fact, I have often remarked this practice among them; and I have seen them embrace each other immediately after having fought. I know not if their interior sentiments correspond with their outward actions, but there is no doubt that these infidels will, on the day of judgment, condemn those bad christians who, not content with entertaining hatred in their hearts, manifest it externally, and who even glory in the vengeance they have taken or intend to take on an enemy.

“Shall we act thus when people, whom we consider savages, look upon anger as a shameful passion?”

The generous devotedness of Father Guérin and his confrères, whom St. Vincent had lately sent to Algeria, was known in many other of the Barbary States and the holy founder of the Mission was solicited, on all sides, to send them Apostles of Christian Charity. Despite his desire to help his former companions in misfortune, the lack of laborers and the urgent need of them in France did not permit him to give a favorable answer to the petition addressed him from Salé. If that mission did not take place, it was owing to

many circumstances beyond his control, as we read in a letter dated July 25, 1646, addressed to Rev. M. Portail :

“We are asked for at Salée, in Barbary, where we are at liberty to preach Jesus Christ. Who would be calculated for this work ?” The French Consul had addressed St. Vincent, who yielded to so christian a request and designated, for the work, one of his priests, who was directed to join the consul at Marseille, and who was prepared to start for Salée. But, religions of another community forestalled him, and St. Vincent, who apprehended any misunderstanding, wrote to the consul in these terms :

“We thank you for the honor you have done our poor, little company in casting your eyes upon it with a view to employ it in the service of God by hastening to the assistance of the slaves in Barbary. But we have a maxim to yield precedence to others who present themselves for the performance of a good work. I am persuaded that they will perform the work better than our priests would. If, unfortunately, laborers whose employments are so similar should have any mutual misunderstanding, christians and infidels would be alike scandalized. The departure of the missionary was countermanded, and the project of a mission at Salée had to be abandoned.

Father Guérin, animated with the spirit of St. Vincent, who had taught him, to consider the Son of God Himself in those poor slaves, put no limit to his zeal. But he did not neglect, conformably to the instructions given him by St. Vincent previous to his departure from Paris, to be faithful to all the exercises of piety followed by the congregation. Besides, his own experience convinced him that it is only by frequent recourse to God in fervent prayer, and by habitual union of heart with the divine Master, that we can become in His hands instrumental to the salvation of souls. When circum-

APPENDIX.

lxxv

stances forced him, at times, to deviate from the order of spiritual exercises to be observed, his first free moments were devoted to the fulfilment of the exercise he had been obliged to defer. The piety for which he was always conspicuous proved his application to the holy exercise of meditation, which St. Vincent considered indispensable to the Priests of the Mission to enable them to come out victorious from the combats which they have to sustain against their enemies, and to maintain themselves in that spirit of faith that should direct all their actions. Spiritual reading and the recitation of his Office were a rest amid his fatigues. In the daily celebration of the Holy Sacrifice his soul regained vigor to sustain the combats of the Lord, by participating in the "Bread of the Strong." Believing that he owed to the slaves, his dear masters, his time and zeal, he was convinced that he owed still more to Brother Francillon, the associate of his labors, because the best means to render him a useful co-operator was to insinuate into his heart the love of God and of his neighbor that animated his own. The devotedness and piety of that excellent Brother were proof sufficient of Father Guérin's care and holy influence.

VII.

Father Guérin could not but sink under his accumulated labors unless aid were promptly furnished him.

Father John Le Vacher landed at Tunis November 22nd, 1647. Notwithstanding his delicate health, he was destined to be of great assistance, and his arrival was very seasonable.

The plague was then raging among Christians and Turks. The two missionaries vied with each other in zeal and devotedness to the plague-stricken, until May, 1648.

Father Le Vacher was attacked by the contagion and so reduced that he was supposed to be dead.

Father Guérin had to leave his apartment to give di-

rections for the burial, and left Brother Francillon alone with the remains.

After a lapse of two hours, the Brother, who could not take his eyes off the dear Missionary, remarked a slight motion. In a transport of joy, tempered by fear, he called for help. The missionary was, indeed, alive; and all, on ascertaining the fact, offered fervent thanks to God.

When Father Guérin informed St. Vincent of Father Le Vacher's illness he, at the same time, described the grief, the tears, the sobs of the poor slaves, the merchants and the consul. Even the Turks, he wrote, called upon us; the grandees of the city offered me their services. In fine, my Father, it is evidently well to serve God, since in our very tribulations, he incites even our enemies to hasten to the assistance of his poor servants.

We are visited by war, pestilence and famine, yet we have no regrets and our courage wavers not. We have no more dread of the plague than if it did not exist. The joy that fills Brother Francillon's heart and my own, since Father Le Vacher's recovery, has made us strong as the lions on our mountains.

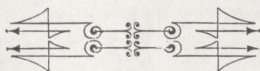
This strength, however, could not endure. The good Brother himself was attacked by the contagion. On the other hand, Father Guérin, who, since the preceding month of October, had been constantly declining, and who was obliged to redouble his efforts in the service of the sick, not having, at a time when war interrupted commerce, and famine made all food poor and scarce, wherewith to preserve strength, fell sick, and the three poor missionaries were all prostrated by sickness. Brother Francillon arose—no one could prevent him. "Let God do with me as he pleases," said he, "but I must bestow on my two Reverend Fathers the services of a son." Neglecting himself, he went from one

APPENDIX.

lxxvii

Priest to the other, leaving their bedsides only to go into the city for medicine and food. God blessed his charity; in a few days he was free from the plague and Father Le Vacher was convalescent. But Father Guérin declined visibly.

(Continued in No. 3, 1894.)



APPENDIX.

lxxix

APPENDIX.

Continuation of Notice of Mr. Julien Guérin, from No. 2.

The progress of his malady did not alarm him; his submission to the will of God was cheerful and absolute; he regarded death as the term of his labors, and the glorious crown which a faithful laborer may expect from the infinite mercy of his God. He had but one regret—that of dying in his bed, when he had promised himself the happiness of being impaled or burned alive for the glory of his divine Master. He gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator, at Tunis, May 13, 1648.

On receiving these tidings, Saint Vincent, notwithstanding his deep affliction, praised God for the health restored to some of his children, which would enable them “to continue their services in favor of the sick and abandoned slaves, which is the highest degree of charity possible in this world;” and for the death of others “because it is a martyrdom of love to die for the corporal and spiritual assistance of the living members of Jesus Christ.” The Saint held two conferences at Saint Lazare’s on the virtues of Mr. Guérin; he collected the details of his life and death to impart them to all the houses of the Congregation. “The subject is well deserving of it, we read in one of his letters, for I have never met a purer soul, one more disengaged from earthly things, and more devoted to God and his neighbor, than he. Oh! what a loss for the poor; but what a loss for us, to be deprived of this example of zeal and charity! I have often availed myself of it, as

most effectual in animating the Company to the practice of these virtues. We have it no longer; God has withdrawn it from us; perhaps to punish us for neglecting to profit by it as we should have done; but as it is evident the greater number have profited by it, may God vouchsafe to excite in us greater zeal to establish everywhere the reign of his divine Son. This good servant of God did not wait till he was sent to Barbary, to love and console the poor; he had always done this in France and in Lorraine, as far as he could, and this has merited for him the happiness of dying in the service of the poor slaves, as many remarked in our conference." Then, looking into the future, he said: "Such a death is precious in the sight of heaven and of earth, and by the grace of God it will be the seed of Missionaries, as the blood of the martyrs was formerly, the seed of Christians."

THE MISSIONARIES OF GENOA.

Victims of the Pestilence in 1657.

Rev. Etienne Blatiron, born January 6, 1614, at St. Julien de Capel, diocese of Clermont; received at Paris, January 6, 1638.

Rev. Nicholas Duport, born at Soissons, March 22, 1619; received at Paris, May 5, 1648.

Rev. Dominic Boccone, born at Tirano, diocese of Albenga, November 12, 1613; received at Genoa, November 9, 1655.

Rev. Anthony Tratebas, born at Allanche, in Provence, November 7, 1632; received at Paris, October 7, 1651.

Rev. Francis Vincent, born at Gandelu, diocese of Meaux; received at Paris, April 2, 1649, aged thirty-eight years.

APPENDIX.

lxxxix

Rev. John Ennery, born in 1616, at the Castle of Makennery, diocese of Limerick, in Ireland; received at Paris, September 23, 1642.

Rev. Jerome Le Juge, born September 30, 1611, at Diano, diocese of Albenga; received at Genoa, March 25, 1650.

Saint Vincent informs us that all the Missionaries who fell victims to the pestilence, at Genoa, were Priests, with the exception of one who was only a Brother. (Letter to Father Lhuillier, Missionary, December 11, 1657.)

Father Etienne Blatiron, who had been many years in the Congregation, was sent to Genoa in 1645. He was detained in this city by Cardinal Durazzo, who was anxious for the instruction of his people; other Missionaries shortly after joined him.

They undertook at once the labors of the Mission, and with such zeal and devotedness, that Saint Vincent, who was such an enemy of inaction, was apprehensive lest they should succumb; and he wrote to them to moderate their zeal. But how could this be done, when the Cardinal, whose health was very frail, was the first to set them an example? He joined in their missions, as one of them, entered into all their practices, and followed to the letter all their regulations.

The parishes, a prey to bitter dissensions, were disarmed by these ministers of peace. Confraternities of charity were founded in the villages, with the offerings of the poor; moreover, they established a society, the duty of which was to teach the essential prayers and the principles of faith to the ignorant, and to go through the parish in search of children, to bring them to catechism.

At Saint Lazare's, Vincent recounted the virtues and labors of the Missionaries at Genoa: "Hence, you see, dear sir, he wrote to Father Blatiron, that the stream

of honey from your hive flows even into this house, and serves as food for the children thereof." He himself, moreover, fed this stream by his words of encouragement, and holy congratulation; he had written, September 12, 1647: "I never think of you and of those who are with you, but with much consolation. You all desire to belong entirely to God, and God desires you all for himself. He has chosen you to render him the first services of the Company in the place in which you are; and for that, doubtless, he will impart to you special graces which will serve as a foundation for all those which he will henceforth bestow upon this new establishment. Such being the case, what gratitude do you not owe to his divine Providence! How absolute should be your confidence in his protection! But also, how great should be your humility, your union, your meekness towards one another!" And then, in a holy transport, and casting himself with them at the feet of divine Goodness, he exclaims: "O my Lord and my God, be thou the bond that unites their hearts! Let all those holy affections which thou hast planted in them bud forth and blossom! Multiply the fruits of their labors, that the children of thy Church may be nourished therewith. Water this new plant with heavenly dew! Fortify and console these poor Missionaries, in the toils of their ministry! In fine, my God, be thou thyself their recompense, and through the efficacy of their prayers, extend thy infinite mercy to me!"

These supplications were graciously heard. We have mentioned the success of the Missions; not less abundant were the results of the exercises followed by those preparing for Holy Orders, and, above all, from the spiritual retreats. These retreats commenced with the pastors with whom the Missionaries had labored, and they were productive of admirable conversions. Some of the Curates made a public confession, as their scandals had been public; and such confessions before men

APPENDIX.

lxxxiii

as well as before God, became in some measure a sort of rule at Genoa, so that it was said on entering the retreat: "We are in the valley of Jehoshaphat."

In this edifying work, Cardinal Durazzo also gave the example. He made his retreat with the Missionaries, followed with scrupulous exactitude all their exercises; devoting, like them, four hours a day to meditation, which he usually made on his knees. In vain was he requested to be seated; he seldom complied; and if fatigue constrained him to rest, he humbly asked permission as if he were a young novice. In his turn, he rendered an account of his meditation, with the simplicity of a Missionary. In his room, at table, he would allow no distinction. And when at the close of the retreat, he was requested to give his blessing to those who had shared with him in these holy exercises, he cast himself on his knees to receive the blessing of the Superior.

By their labors, the Missionaries, and particularly their Superior, Father Etienne Blatiron, whom Cardinal Durazzo proclaimed one of the best Missionaries of the world, wrought an entire change in the diocese of Genoa.

In 1656 and 1657, the plague subjected their charity to a new test. The letters of Vincent, at this period, abound in harrowing details on this subject. On returning from the country to the city, in which the scourge was daily on the increase, Father Blatiron found the streets encumbered with corpses, and among these were four persons still alive, who had fallen there from exhaustion, expecting soon to die in their turn. (1.) Five or six thousand died weekly. No one ventured to enter the unfortunate city to bring relief, and no one had strength enough to go and gather the offerings left in the outskirts. Vincent wrote September 9, 1657: "A vessel from Savoy having reached the

(1.) Letter to Father Get, at Marseilles, August 24, 1657.

port signalled for a long time without receiving any response ; therefore, the provisions it had brought were left on shore ; but returning a few days afterwards, the food was found untouched."

At the epoch of this letter, the pestilence had reached its height. The Jesuits and the Missionaries had been obliged to resign their houses to the plague-stricken, and had taken rented apartments (1.) Neither the change of season, nor the prayers which the Church caused to be offered on the occasion of a jubilee, arrested the scourge, nor weakened in the least degree its severity. Vincent wrote : "It must be that the sins of the States of the Church are very grievous, since they force God to exercise his justice to such a degree. May it please his divine mercy soon to visit these unfortunate cities, and console so many afflicted nations, all suffering in one way or another !" In his profound sorrow, he had reason, however, to thank God that, so far, his children had been spared, and he prayed that they might be protected to the end (2.) But ere long the Superior himself, Father Etienne Blatiron, fell a victim to the scourge at Genoa, while at the same period, Rev. Father Jolly was stricken down at Rome, and other Missionaries, elsewhere. What grief overspread the house of Saint Lazare, and what fervent prayers ascended to heaven from all the houses of the Company when tidings of the danger threatening these excellent laborers, reached them ! One of these holy servants of God was spared to govern at a later period, the Congregation of the Mission ; the other, with several companions of his heroic charity, was called by God to eternal repose.

Let us listen to Vincent announcing these sorrowful tidings in his conference on the virtue of confidence :

"Oh ! Gentlemen and my Brothers," said he, "how

(1.) Letter to Father Ozenne, in Poland, July 7, 1657.

(2.) Letter December 22, 1656.

great confidence we should have in God, giving ourselves entirely into his hands, in the firm conviction that his Providence disposes for our good all that he wills or permits to befall us ! Yes, whatever God gives or takes away is all for our good, since it is his good pleasure ; and his good pleasure is our happiness. In this view, I announce to you the affliction that has fallen upon us, and which I may say in all truth, my Brothers, is the greatest that could have happened. God has taken from us the chief and principal support of our house in Genoa. Mr. Blatiron, Superior of this establishment, a great servant of God, alas ! is no more ! But this is not the only affliction ; good Mr. Duport, who so cheerfully embraced the service of the plague-stricken—a man so filled with charity for his neighbor, with zeal and ardor for the salvation of souls, has been carried off by the pestilence. One of our Italian Priests, Mr. Dominic Boccone, an excellent and virtuous Missionary, as I have been informed, died in the lazaretto in which he was placed to serve the victims of the scourge in the country. Mr. Tratebas, who was also a true servant of God, a very holy Missionary, remarkable for every virtue, is also dead. Mr. Francis Vincent, with whom you were acquainted, and who was not inferior to the others in virtue, is dead. Mr. Ennery, a learned, pious and exemplary man, is dead. Alas ! Gentleman, and my Brothers, the contagious malady has deprived us of all these courageous laborers. God has called them to himself. Of their number, eight, only one remains, Mr. Le Juge, who, having been stricken by the plague, recovered ; and, at present, he is ministering to the other patients. O, Saviour, Jesus ! What a loss ! What an affliction ! Now it is, that we have great need of resignation to the holy will of God ; for otherwise, what should we do, but vainly lament, and be grieved at the loss of these ardent lovers of the glory of God ? But with this resignation,

after allowing our tears to flow at the thought of this separation, we raise our hearts to God to praise and bless him for all these losses, since they have happened only by the dispensations of his most holy will. But, Gentlemen and my Brothers, can we say that we have lost those whom God has taken from us? Oh! no, we have not lost them; and we must believe that the ashes of these good Missionaries will be as seed which will produce others. Hold for certain, that God will not withdraw from this Company the graces which he had confided to them, but he will extend the same to those who will have the courage to replace them."

(Maynard, St. Vincent de Paul, book vi, ch. iii.)

Rev. Fathers Girard Brin, Edme Barry, Brother Thaddeus Lye, and Other
Missionaries in Ireland, 1652.

Father Girard Brin was born at Cashel, in Ireland; he was received into the Congregation at Paris, October 14, 1639.

Father Edme Barry was born in the diocese of Cloyne, in Ireland; he was received into the Congregation at Paris, July 21, 1641; ordained Priest at Cahors. Thaddeus Lye, Brother of the Mission.

In the year 1646 Innocent X. invited St. Vincent to send Missionaries into Ireland. The Pope in all probability responded, in so doing, to a request on the part of Henrietta of France, who had fostered relations with the Irish Catholics, and who sought to render effectual a secret treaty ratified in their favor by Charles I.

Vincent immediately obeyed the orders of the Sovereign Pontiff; he selected from his Company eight Missionaries, among whom, five were natives of Ireland. They, as obedient as their Father, cast themselves at his feet, soliciting a blessing before their departure: "Be united, said he to them, and God will bless you; but let the bond of this union be the charity of Jesus

APPENDIX.

lxxxvii

Christ; for any union not cemented by the blood of this divine Saviour cannot subsist. It is therefore in Jesus Christ, by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, that you must be united. The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of union and peace; how could you draw souls to Jesus Christ if you were not united among yourselves and with him? You could never do it. Have then but one will, but one desire; otherwise, it would be with you as with horses fastened to a vehicle, some pulling one way, some another; and thus they spoil and destroy everything. God calls you to labor in his vineyard; enter it, having in him but one same heart and intention; and by this means you will gather much fruit.

He then recommends to them obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff, so necessary in a country in which the policy of England was enticing the clergy to revolt. He drew up regulations for their conduct during the journey and after their arrival at the scene of their labors; nor did they fail to recognize in after times the wisdom and equity of his counsels.

The Missionaries set out from Paris about the middle of October, 1646. Having been delayed for some time at Nantes, they ministered to the sick and needy in the hospitals, and gave conferences to the Ladies of Charity established in the parishes.

They did the same at St. Nazarius, where they were to embark on a Dutch vessel. They gave a kind of Mission to the numerous passengers on board, and reaped the first fruits of their apostolate in the conversion of an English gentleman to Catholicity; being mortally wounded, three days after, he expired, blessing their charity and the great mercy of God.

They finally set sail, and after having escaped tempests at sea, persecutions on land, and death under various forms, they arrived at their destination. They divided among them the dioceses of Limerick and Cashel.

In these localities they performed their ordinary exercises with a success which astonished the Bishops of Ireland, and elicited the praise of the Nuncio Rinucini, who still resided in the kingdom. Here, as elsewhere, the clergy and people were equally transformed. But the persecution then broke out. Charles First had just died upon the scaffold, and the Catholics evinced their loyalty to the Prince of Wales. Cromwell, being named Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, set out at the news of the defeat of the royal army, and signalized the capture of Drogheda, Wexford and Kilkenny, by horrible massacres; then, returning to England, he left his kinsman, the fierce Ireton, commander-in-chief. The bloody tyranny continued to weigh heavily principally upon the Catholics. It was impossible to give missions in the country occupied by the members of Parliament. True, wherever missions had been previously given, the Missionaries were worthily replaced by the curates, not one of whom abandoned his post. One of these who, in a retreat made during the previous year at Limerick with the Priests of the Mission, had declared that he would be happy to die for the faith and for the cause of charity, was massacred by the soldiers of Ireton, whilst administering the Sacraments to the sick.

Vincent recalled five of his Priests to France, leaving three at Limerick. The five Missionaries brought to their Father most honorable letters which had been delivered to them at their departure by the Bishops of Limerick and Cashel.

The three Missionaries who remained in Limerick at the request of the Bishop, gave a mission in this city which, including the refugees from the country, numbered at least twenty thousand communicants. Notwithstanding the disproportion between the work and the number of laborers, the Missionaries, after the preliminary difficulties, achieved an unprecedented suc-

APPENDIX.

lxxxix

cess, as the Bishop himself expressed in writing to Vincent. True, the prelate, the nobility, the magistrates, all contributed thereto. God himself seemed to take the cause in hand by striking with sudden death some incorrigible blasphemers.

In writing these details to Vincent, the bishop of Limerick requested him to address some words of consolation to his Missionaries. On the other hand, one of his children had written to him on the return of his confrères to France, to assure him that they were all resolved to be faithful to their design of remaining in Limerick, be the danger what it might. Vincent replied in the month of April, 1650:

“We have been much edified by your letter, seeing therein two consoling effects of the grace of God. First, you have given yourselves to God to remain courageously in a country in which you are surrounded by dangers, preferring rather to expose yourselves to death than to fail in charity towards your neighbor; and, secondly, you try to preserve your confrères by sending them back to France, thus to remove them from the scene of danger. The spirit of martyrdom urges you in the first case, and you are actuated by prudence in the second, and both virtues are drawn from the example of our divine Saviour, who, about to suffer torments and death for the salvation of men, sought to guarantee the safety of his disciples, saying: “Let these go their way.” Thus you have acted as a true child of this adorable Father to whom I render heartfelt thanks for having operated in you acts of sovereign charity, the highest of all virtues.

“I implore him to fill you with it, that practising it in all things, and at all times, you may impart it to those who have it not. Since the other gentlemen with you have the same intention to remain, despite the dangers of war and pestilence, we think it well to leave them. How do we know what God intends to do with

them? He certainly does not inspire them with so holy a resolution to no purpose. My God, how inscrutable are thy judgments! At the close of a Mission which is the most fruitful, and perhaps the most necessary that was ever given, it seems that thou dost check the course of thy mercies on this repentant city, to lay a heavy hand upon it, adding the scourge of pestilence to the miseries of war. But this is to reap a plentiful harvest of souls well prepared, and to gather the good grain into thy eternal kingdom; we adore thy dispensations, O Lord."

To the war had just been added a pestilence so violent, that eight thousand persons were carried off in Limerick. Of this number was the Bishop's brother, who had devoted himself, with the Missionaries, to the service of the plague-stricken. All, however, died in good dispositions, for, said they: "God has sent us angels to reconcile us with him." And the grateful Bishop constantly repeated: "Alas! if Mr. Vincent had done for the glory of God only the good which he has procured these poor people, he should esteem himself very happy."

But war completed the destruction of this unfortunate city. Ireton, after a siege of four or five months, became master of it. Twenty-two persons were to be abandoned to the mercy of the conqueror, among whom were the Bishop of Emly, shut up within its walls, and the Mayor of the city, Sir Thomas Stretch. Sir Thomas was elected Mayor on concluding a retreat with the Priests of the Mission, and he accepted the office that he might devote himself to procure the welfare of the people.

The three Missionaries, however, escaped the fury of Ireton. One of them remained at Limerick, and there terminated his holy career. The two other Fathers, Brinn and Barry, left the city under disguise, with a hundred and twenty Priests and religious, mingling

APPENDIX.

xcî

with the soldiers of the place, for whom capitulation had secured the privilege of life and retreat. As there was no safety for Catholic Priests, they spent the preceding night in preparation for death. Happily, they were not recognized. On quitting Limerick, they separated with deep regret, the better to ensure the life of one of them, at least. Father Brinn journeyed through his country with the Grand Vicar of Cashel. Father Barry repaired to the mountains; a charitable lady received him and concealed him during two months. A vessel freighted for France having reached the coast, he profited by it and arrived safely at Nantes. This was the cause of great joy to Vincent, who thought his two Priests had been included in the massacre of Limerick.

His company, however, paid a tribute to the bloody persecution. A Brother, named Thaddeus Lye, who was discovered by the heretics, was horribly massacred in presence of his mother. His skull was broken after having had his feet and hands cut off.

(Letter of Saint Vincent to Father Lambert, March 22, 1652.)

Rev. Charles Nacquart, Priest of the Mission.

MADAGASCAR, May 29, 1650.

Rev. Charles Nacquart was born at Treslon, a small town of the diocese of Soissons; he entered the Congregation of the Mission at St. Lazare, April 6, 1640. Having completed his Seminary and subsequent studies under St. Vincent, he was sent to The Richelieu. At this house, in the diocese of Tours, the Missionaries directed the parish; they also gave Missions in the surrounding villages. Full of zeal for the honor and glory of God, Father Nacquart had already manifested to his venerated Father his great desire to labor for the salvation of souls, amongst the infidels; but he waited patiently until it might please divine Providence to

permit him to realize this ardent wish of his heart. This happy moment was rapidly approaching.

* * *

Whilst England and Holland were disputing the commerce of India, the France of Louis XIII, ruled, it is true, less by royal authority, than by the brilliant administrative genius of her great statesman, Richelieu, listened attentively to the enthusiastic descriptions of the navigators, who, en route for the Indies, had landed at the Island of St. Lawrence, or Madagascar. These men, so eager for great enterprises, were charmed by the extent, fertility, and maritime position of this country, and they at once coveted its possession.

The East India Company was organized; Captain Rigault, de la Rochelle, naval officer, its representative, obtained from Cardinal Richelieu, Jan. 22, 1642, the right and privilege, says Mr. de Flacourt, "to send persons to Madagascar and other islands in its vicinity, to found colonies and to establish commerce, as they should judge profitable for trade; and to take possession of these lands in the name of His Most Christian Majesty."

The Cardinal delivered these letters-patent to Rigault Jan. 29th, of the same year; the grant was confirmed by a decree of the Council on the 15th Feb., following, and in the year after by the King (Sept. 20, 1643.) (1.)

In these first ventures, the East India Company never doubted of success; but these gentlemen soon realized that one essential feature was wanting, therefore their undertaking was a failure. In the foundation of their colony they had ignored Religion, and now perceiving, that unless their boasted structure could rest upon this firm and solid basis, it must totter, and fall at last, they wisely resolved to repair their first mistake: *Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam*; (2) without God

(1.) Foundation of the French East India Company, 1655. Carpenter.

(2.) Ps. CXXVI, v. 1.

and the assistance which God alone can promise and fulfil, no society can subsist: even the pagans always recognized this truth, and yet there are Christians who appear sometimes to lose sight of it.

A new Governor better qualified for the position, was now appointed, and it was decided that some zealous Priests should accompany him to Madagascar; the Company desired that Vincent de Paul should provide these Priests, and their request was presented to him by Cardinal Bagni, Apostolic Nuncio to the court of France.

The Saint, who was consumed with the desire to go himself to evangelize the infidels, rejoiced at this proposal; blessing divine Providence for having made choice of his Congregation, he confided entirely to its guidance, a Mission which promised to his children, with the palm of martyrdom, abundant blessings.

When the matter had been agreed upon, he announced the new Mission to his Company in these truly apostolic words:

“Behold a grand field of labor which God deigns to open to us, as well at Madagascar, as at the Hebrides Islands, and other places. Let us entreat our Lord to inflame our hearts with a desire to serve him; let us give ourselves to him to do his holy will. Saint Vincent Ferrer sought to encourage himself in the hope that God would raise up Priests who, by the fervor of their zeal, would enkindle the fire of divine love in the hearts of all mankind. If we do not deserve to be of the number of these Priests, may God grant us the grace to bear some resemblance, that thus, at least, we may become their precursors. Be this as it may, let us hold it for certain, that we shall prove ourselves true Christians, only inasmuch as we are disposed to lose everything, even to sacrifice life itself, through love for Jesus Christ, and to promote his glory; resolving with the same Apostle, rather to suffer torments

and death, than to be separated from the charity of Jesus Christ.”

The East India Company appointed Mr. de Flacourt new Governor of Madagascar; the Missionaries designated by St. Vincent, were Rev. Father Nacquart, and his companion, Rev. Father Gondrée; the latter was soon called to his reward; the notice of his virtuous life and holy death has already been given. The Missionaries were to sail in April, 1648.

* * *

Under date of March 22, 1648, the Saint wrote to Father Nacquart a letter filled with apostolic sentiments, announcing the Mission which he was about to confide to him :

“When in your presence, mention was made of the proposition to open Missions amongst the Gentiles and idolaters, it seems to me, as you afterwards wrote, that our Lord made known to you that you are called to this work. It is time that this seed of the divine vocation, begin to bear fruit in your soul; for now behold, Mgr. the Nuncio, by the authority of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, of which our Holy Father, the Pope, is the head, has chosen the Company to go and serve God in the Island of St. Lawrence, also known as Madagascar; and the Company has cast its eyes upon you, as the best victim it can offer in homage to our Sovereign Creator, to whom, with another good Priest of the Company, you will not refuse to render this service.

“O, my more than very dear sir, what says your heart at this news? Is it not overwhelmed with confusion on receiving so great a favor from heaven? Is not this vocation as sublime, as admirable even as that of the apostles, and of the greatest saints in the Church of God! Thus in time are the eternal designs of the Almighty accomplished in you! Humility, sir, is alone capable of preserving this grace; entire abandon of

APPENDIX.

XCV

all that you are or can be, into overflowing confidence in our divine and all-powerful Creator, must follow.

“Great courage and generosity are necessary for you. Even greater than that of Abraham, must be your faith. You must likewise possess the charity of St. Paul. Like St. Francis Xavier, you will also have need of zeal, deference, poverty, solicitude, discretion, integrity, and to all these, must be joined a great desire to consume your strength in the service of God.

“Let this, however, be your capital study, viz.: After having endeavored to shed around you the good odor of meekness and holy example, apply yourself to enlighten these poor people, who, born in the darkness of ignorance, know not their Creator; unfold to them the truths of our holy faith, not by the subtile reasons of theology, but by examples taken from nature; begin in this way, explaining to them that you are only re-tracing in them the qualities which God had implanted within their hearts, but which the corruption of nature, so long accustomed to evil, had almost eradicated. For this end, sir, you must frequently address yourself to the Father of Lights, repeating to him what you say daily: *Da mihi intellectum ut sciam testimonia tua*. Although there may be books which treat of these matters, I can only insist that the best book you can make use of, is prayer: *Accedite ad eum et illuminamini*; abandon yourself to the spirit of God, who speaks to you in meditation when you entertain yourself with him, that it may please his divine goodness to grant you the grace to cultivate the seed of the Christians who are already there, and who live in Christian charity among these good people. I do not doubt, sir, that our Lord sends you in advance to prepare for the Company an abundant harvest. Go, then, sir, and being appointed by God, through those who represent him in your regard, boldly let down your net.

“I know how much your heart loves purity; this

virtue will be indispensable to you. In the land for which obedience destines you, there exist many vicious customs, especially on this point. The infallible grace of your vocation will shield you from all these dangers. We shall hear from you every year, and you shall also have tidings of us.

“What more shall I say, sir, if not to entreat our Lord, who has given you part in his charity, also to permit you to share in his patience, and that there is no condition on earth which I would so earnestly desire, were it lawful, than to replace as your companion, Father Gondrée.”

To this letter, traced in his tender affection and solicitude by the best of fathers, in a touching simplicity, Father Nacquart thus replied:

“As I read over and over, your letter, it seems to me that your words are not those of a man, but they are dictated by the Spirit of God, who thus makes known to me that he is pleased to make use of me in so noble a vocation.

I do indeed acknowledge myself most unworthy, and I can with difficulty persuade myself that it is really to me, poor Charles Nacquart, that God is pleased to signify his design. Oh, well! Since you hold in my regard the place of my heavenly Father, I shall no longer doubt. Let Father Gondrée come as soon as he pleases; like a lost child, I shall follow him blindly that I may reach the promised land, and, although like Moses, I have seen my hand covered with leprosy, I have confidence that God will also give to me the potent rod, to accomplish all that it may enter into his designs to require of me.

“These merchants, who embark in this enterprise for the sake of temporal gain, will put me to shame, if I do not for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, as much as they do for commercial profit.”

Father Nacquart and his companion went to la Ro-

APPENDIX.

xevii

chelle, whence they were to sail. "We remained there for nearly a month," he wrote to St. Vincent, "nevertheless, we were not idle; for having presented ourselves to Mgr., the Bishop, he gave us permission to occupy ourselves as we might think most expedient for the glory of God. This favor we received with gratitude; in imitation of St. Francis Xavier, whom you gave as our model during the voyage, we chose the hospitals, in which, although we were not lodged, we spent the greater portion of the morning visiting and serving the sick, with the consent of the Fathers of Charity, who kindly associated us with them in their good work.

"During the Paschal time the prisoners were our parishioners; after having administered the Sacraments to them, we served as messengers between them and those persons from whom they hoped to obtain their deliverance." (1.)

* * *

At length they sailed from this port. During the voyage Father Nacquart evangelized the crew, also the passengers. His zeal and mildness won him the affection of all, and secured to him the most consoling results. The life of these Missionaries on board the vessel was a truly apostolic one.

The voyage, which lasted six months, was, at times, both painful and dangerous.

Father Nacquart wrote: "Having had contrary winds from the beginning of July until August 16th, we were in the necessity of slackening our speed; but we had recourse to Him who commands the winds, and to the Star of the Sea, the holy Virgin. In her honor we made a public vow to God, to confess and communicate during the week preceding her glorious Assumption, and to build a church under the invocation of this Queen of Heaven, at Madagascar; to this was

(1.) Letter to St. Vincent de Paul, Feb. 5, 1650.

added an alms according to each one's devotion. As soon as all had, so to speak, by penitential sentiments, thrown Jonas into the sea, the tempest ceased, and the wind became favorable, so that on the eve of Our Lady's feast we had crossed the *Line*.

"We experienced the same succor from heaven, towards the feast of Our Lady in September. The wind was against us, but became favorable immediately after we had offered public prayers in honor of the holy Virgin. On several other occasions also, we experienced her efficacious assistance.

"Finally, after a voyage of six months, we came in sight of Madagascar. I then exhorted all on board to mutually forgive and forget any unpleasant occurrence of this long and tedious journey; this all promised to do; and on December 4, 1648, we anchored safely in the port so long and so ardently desired.

"Being among the first to land, I immediately knelt down to offer myself to God to fulfil his designs, and to take spiritual possession of this island, as well as all others, in his name, by the authority of Our Holy Father, the Pope, to establish therein the empire of Jesus Christ, whilst destroying that of the prince of darkness.

"On the following day, Dec. 5th, Mr. de Flacourt, our conductor and Governor of the country, Father Gondrée, my companion, and all who had made the voyage with us, having assembled at the Fort, I celebrated a solemn mass of thanksgiving; after which the *Te Deum* was chanted in fulfilment of the vow we had made at sea. The French who were here, received us with great joy; the rest having lodgings, we took up our abode in a miserable habitation, which no one had chosen.

* * *

At once the work of evangelization was commenced. Father Nacquart had the consolation to find the natives

APPENDIX.

xcix

well-disposed; but alas! he had frequently the grief to see the good he endeavored to do, counteracted by the scandalous lives of the Europeans.

"I have met with many difficulties in the practice of your advice," wrote he to St. Vincent, "relative to a mild and respectful manner of speaking, yet faithful to defend the honor of God, and not to betray my conscience; for you know that seculars often hold discourses to which a Priest should not listen. I have then sought, as gently as I could, to turn the conversation. But this desire to remain faithful to God and my conscience, has sometimes given offence. However, of the two, I chose to displease man, rather than God, fearing lest I should lose my claim to the quality of servant of Jesus Christ."

He added further information concerning his early labors:

"Dian-Ramach, one of the kings of this country, often invited me to remain at Fanshere near him; this place would be very suitable for the establishment of Missions for this island. A school for small children could be opened here; a large number might attend the instruction, as they are very intelligent; and their maintenance would not cost a great deal, for they sleep on the ground, and live on rice and roots which grow in the country.

"Some Daughters of Charity, well-grounded in virtue, could take charge of the girls. Such an establishment is very much needed; we must do what we can for those advanced in years, but it is the children who will instruct their parents and regenerate this land."

By courageous and assiduous study of the language, Father Nacquart was enabled very soon to compile for the natives, a short summary of the Christian Doctrine.

"You can have printed," he wrote, "one hundred copies of the Catechism which I send for the natives, these can be used at present; later we shall have prayer-books, well-bound and in large type."

After a few months, Father Nacquart addressed the following notes to St. Vincent de Paul:

“We endeavored, from our arrival, to edify and gain all by mildness of speech; this was the principal means by which the divine Goodness was pleased to effect the conversion of five heretics. Our first care was to dispose the French whom we found here, to gain the Jubilee for peace. Afterwards, we applied ourselves to the study of the language of the natives, a task both laborious and painful.

“As soon as we were able to stammer a few words, we began to instruct the infidels; among these the negroes are much more docile than the whites. Hence, in them are verified the words of our divine Saviour: *Abscondisti hæc a sapientibus, et revelasti ea parvulis*: ‘Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones;’ for these good negroes, after having listened to an instruction, say to one another: ‘We must no longer swear, nor work on Sundays, nor steal.’

“Six days after our arrival, having heard that the Chief of this country, whose name is Andrian-Ramach, had lived for three years at Goa, whence the Portuguese had brought him here at the age of seventeen (and he is now fifty), I went with some Frenchmen to see him at Fanshere, where he dwells, a day and a-half’s journey from here. We were presented on the part of the Governor, Mr. de Flacourt. He received us kindly and recited in Portuguese, the *Pater, Ave*, and the *Credo*. I asked him why he, alone in this country, knew how to pray to God; he replied that the inhabitants had never learned to pray, and there were no Priests to teach them. I then told him that I had come to offer to serve him and all his subjects, who would be capable of praying to God, after they had been taught as he was. He answered that he would be glad, that he would assist at the prayers

APPENDIX.

ci

held in his village. Other great men of the place promised to do the same.

"After some conversation, I caressed the children, holding them by the hand, according to the custom of the country, and stammering a few words of their language; then I made them some little presents, with which they were delighted. They called me, *their father*, and I said: *You are my children*.

"They all looked at me very attentively, and when I went aside to recite the divine office, they came to see me praying to God, and grouped themselves around me. This first journey filled me with consolation and hope. On my return I consoled my dear companion with these glad tidings. We spent the Christmas feasts gaining our Jubilee; also in administering the Sacraments and preaching to the French, according to our custom. On the Epiphany, to correspond with the mystery of the call of the Gentiles, we began to baptize the children, but no adults. Mr. de Flacourt named the first boy, *Peter*, and behold the first *stone* of our spiritual Church."

Having related several conversions both among the Europeans who had come to Madagascar, and the natives, Father Nacquart adds:

"During the month of August I betook myself to the neighboring mountains. There, devoting the day to the people who had remained in the villages, and in the evening by moon-light, I instructed those who were returning from their daily toil. I was exceedingly encouraged seeing these poor creatures evince so lively a faith,—believing with their whole hearts,—and with tears in my eyes I asked: *Quid prohibet eos baptizari?* 'Why do I not baptize them?' Fearing, however, that they might abuse the grace of the Sacrement, as there would be no Priest to foster Christian piety in their hearts, I made an absolute surrender of all into the hands of the adorable

Providence of God. I would have baptized the children, but I was deterred by the fear, that as these pagans change so frequently their place of abode, it might not be possible to discriminate between them and those who had received the gift of faith.

“Those whom I baptized in the villages contiguous to our own residence can easily be recognized, as they are called by their baptismal name. I must deny myself the gratification of enumerating the names, journeys, villages, and also the people to whom I have preached our Lord Jesus Christ. I shall only say that the inhabitants are most favorably disposed to receive the Gospel; indeed in this respect they leave us nothing to desire. All lament that the French, since their arrival in the island, have never spoken to them of the faith, and they bear a holy envy towards those whose dwellings are near our own.

“I had brought with me a large picture of the Last Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. In each village I cried out that I had come that they might see and hear the things that were for their salvation. Having explained the truths that they must believe, and the law of God which they are bound to observe—I showed them the picture, entreating them to choose their eternal dwelling-place, Paradise or Hell. They all exclaimed: ‘We would never choose our abode with the devil; but we desire to dwell forever with God.’

“To those who came later, they said: ‘Ah! what you have missed!’ and I was obliged to unroll the picture, and explain its meaning. On my return, passing through Fanshere, I showed my pictures to the King, who recognized and explained them. I begged him to allow me to baptize the children of his village. To this he readily consented.

“As the feast of Christmas drew near, I visited Anosse (Anos Anossi), where there are ten thousand inhabitants. There remained only two other visits

APPENDIX.

ciii

for me to make in order to prepare the way of the Lord, *in all the places into which he is to come*. I hastened to do this, that those who come after, may at least find the way open to them. All this could not be done without great fatigue. But our good God, who for the Apostles smoothed all difficulties, makes the heat appear refreshing as a gentle dew, to those whom he casts into the furnace of divine charity."

Father Nacquart, mindful of the Gospel truths, then adds :

"Let me tell you, Sir, these people languish whilst waiting for the 'movement of the waters,' *motum aquae*, when Christ's minister will plunge them into the pool of baptism. (1.) How often, whilst preaching in the country-places, I have shed tears on hearing these poor people exclaim : 'Where then is this water of regeneration which you have promised us? Hasten to bestow it, pour it upon us, with prayer.' But I hesitate, fearing that they know not what they ask, like the woman of Samaria, who, to avoid the labor of drawing water from the material well, asked our divine Saviour to give her to drink, that she might thirst no more ; but she as yet understood nothing of that water which extinguishes the fire of concupiscence, and *springs up unto eternal life*.

"I have already told you that I found here five children whom I baptized. To these it has pleased our Lord to add fifty others. There are also many adults who are well-disposed, but I delay, wishing to administer the Sacrament of matrimony immediately after that of baptism, thus to apply a remedy to the vice so prevalent in these parts ; I had done the same for those whom I baptized in France. I shall be careful, however, not to allow any that are sufficiently instructed, to die without baptism. Not long ago, I brought into

(1.) John, v, 4.

the church, a poor old woman, who received from God, in her last illness, a wonderful evidence of the divine mercy. She was the first called from amongst us to a happy eternity, and her body the first to be interred in the French Cemetery.

“On the feast of the Purification, we blessed and laid the foundation-stone of our new church. We must return thanks to God, for having vouchsafed to make choice of us to raise a Temple to his divine Majesty in so vast a kingdom, where, although there are more than four hundred thousand souls, there is not a vestige of a church. These people only wait, if I may so express it, to be cut and polished, that they may become the living stones of the spiritual edifice, which we hope to erect to the glory of God.”

After this account of his labors, the man of God breaks forth into these Apostolic reproaches :

“Oh ! where are so many learned doctors, as St. Francis Xavier said formerly, who waste their lives in academies, whilst so many infidels are asking for bread, and there is none to break it to them ! *Petunt panem et non est qui frangat eis !* May it please the Lord of the harvest to provide for them. For without Priests to instruct them and preserve the fruits of the Gospel, little progress can be made. I doubt not, sir, that all the members of our Congregation rejoice greatly at news so encouraging to their zeal, and that they also desire to co-operate with God in the conquest of this new kingdom for Jesus Christ. Let compassion move them to entreat the mercy of God in my behalf, seeing me in a country so far distant, alone, to administer the Sacraments to others, without being able myself to receive the holy absolution. After God, I could have no sweeter consolation than to know that in our Congregation, still greater things are being done for our Holy Church, and for the glory of Jesus Christ.”

APPENDIX.

CV

A memoir, written by this indefatigable Missionary, relates other remarkable conversions, as well as many trials through which he passed. Doubtless, the most cruel anguish was that which he experienced in the death of his companion, Father Gondrée; henceforth in a foreign land, he was the only Priest, but he ceased not to devote himself unreservedly to his duties.

* * *

His memoir abruptly ends, May 1, 1650. Continuing his apostolic journeys, Father Nacquart was attacked by the illness, which carried him off on the 29th of the same month. Our hearts are deeply afflicted at the thought of this void made by the death of so holy a Missionary. Rev. Father Mousnier, who later was called by divine Providence to gather the fruits of the labors of this man of God, gives us some particulars of the last moments of his predecessor:

“The fatiguing labors of the Lent of 1650 visibly impaired the health of Father Nacquart. Notwithstanding the weakness of the body, the soul was still consumed with zeal for the conversion of the infidels and the sanctification of the French who had been confided to his care. An interior voice continually urged him to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the adjacent villages. He realized this desire of his heart, but he returned quite exhausted, yet greatly consoled at the eagerness with which many parents had entrusted their children to him, that he might instruct them in the truths of our holy Religion.

“On the feast of the Good Shepherd, in his sermon to the French at Fort Dauphin, the better to induce them to lead a life more conformable to the sanctity of the faith which they professed, he warned them that in punishment of their disorders and injustice, as well as their negligence in participating in the graces offered by the Sacraments, Almighty God might

permit them to seek him without being able to find him. He afterwards paraphrased these words of St. Matthew : *Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves* : 'I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed.' In pronouncing these words, Father Nacquart did not dream that they were soon to be so sorrowfully verified.

"In his apostolic journeys from May 9th, to the 19th, the Missionary baptized nine little children, and one old man of sixty years, who was at the point of death. This aged chief presided over a village, where some instruction had been given. Returning after these duties, Father Nacquart found himself in a very suffering condition. During the few days preceding the Ascension, which this year fell on May 26th, he was obliged to keep his bed. Although consumed by the violence of the fever which had prostrated him, nothing could prevent him from offering up the Holy Sacrifice on the feast itself. During Mass, he once more addressed a few words to the French, exhorting them to live together in peace and mutual charity. These were his last recommendations, like unto those of our divine Saviour, on the eve of his Passion, to his disciples.

"From the chapel, the Missionary again took to his bed. In the evening, he sent for one of the Frenchmen, an excellent and pious man, giving into his charge the book entitled the *Charitable Christian*, begging him to use it in preparing the sick for death, until the arrival of another Priest. You can commence with me, said Father Nacquart, by reading for me from time to time, some passages suitable for the sick. On this same day or the following, he expressed his desire that all the Frenchmen should come to him. When they were assembled around him, he exhorted them to live in charity, to avoid all kinds of sin, never to forget that wherever they might be, they must never

APPENDIX.

evii

lose sight of the salvation of their immortal souls, that our life being in the hands of God, he may call us to himself, at the moment in which we least think of it. He then conjured them, by the charity of Jesus Christ, to exercise forbearance and mutual support in all necessities, especially in time of sickness. Feeling his strength gradually diminish, and being unable to repair to the chapel to consume the Sacred Species, Father Nacquart supplicated them always to render to our divine Saviour, present in the consecrated Host, the honor and respect which are due to him, and that in case the French would be obliged to abandon the Fort, they must promise him that they would take with them the tabernacle, or at least the holy ciborium. One would say that he foresaw the misfortunes with which the colony was shortly after threatened.

Finally, having received all these promises, he begged Mr. de Flacourt, when God would have called him away from this world, to have him laid in the lot destined for the construction of a church, of which he had laid the first stone, on the feast of the Purification, near the spot on which the altar would be erected. He also begged the Commander of the Fort to exhume the body of Father Gondrée, his companion, and to bury it in the same grave with himself. (1.) After this he lost consciousness, and on Sunday, May 29th, he passed to a better life, there to receive the recompense of all his privations, fatigues and sufferings, borne cheerfully for the love of God and the salvation of souls.

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The Commander and all the French mourned the good Missionary as a father. To give all possible solemnity to his obsequies, the body was clothed in sac-

(1.) This desire was realized only after the completion of the church, by the Missionaries who succeeded Father Nacquart.

erdotal robes and carried to the chapel, where the office of the dead was chanted. The body was then placed in the vault which he himself had designed. Fearing that he would not be able to offer the holy Sacrifice on the anniversary of the death of Father Gondrée, he had anticipated it by some weeks, when he felt his strength declining. After this example, the French were faithful to repair to the chapel May 29th of the following year, to chant the office of the dead for the repose of his soul."

The death of this holy Priest was a calamity for the colony, for all the French lost in him a devoted and tender friend, a prudent counsellor, a charitable pacificator in their troubles; and, in a word, a pastor most solicitous for the welfare of body and soul. His mild influence over those in power, as well as over the other inhabitants in the vicinity of Fort Dauphin, was appreciated more fully after his death. When the tidings of his decease were circulated in the country, Dian-Machicore, whose child had been baptized by Father Nacquart, did not hesitate to proclaim "that in losing him, the French had lost their spirit, and their light was extinguished;" he meant by this, that they had lost their counsellor and guide, and that it would be easy for the natives to rid themselves of them. In fact, they rose in rebellion, and a fierce war was in progress, when a reinforcement arrived from France.

Mr. de Flacourt renders homage to the apostolic virtues of Father Nacquart in the following terms: "May 29th Sire Nacquart, Priest of the Mission, died after an illness of six days; thus, we are deprived of a pastor. He was an intelligent man, zealous for religion, and he lived in the most exemplary manner; he had already acquired sufficient knowledge of the language to instruct the inhabitants of the country, in which duty he was constantly employed. He is deeply regretted by all, particularly, as his example led many

APPENDIX.

cix

of the French to the practice of virtue, and a good life; for these formerly, from want of instruction, had yielded to vice."

During his sojourn of seventeen months at Madagascar, Father Nacquart had baptized seventy-seven Malgaches, brought many Protestants into the bosom of the Church, and rectified many marriages of the French contracted with the native women. By his preaching, he caused our holy religion to be known and loved in all the villages for ten leagues around. The number of negroes, who profited by his instructions, was ever on the increase. He thought even of asking for Daughters of Charity, who would have been of great assistance to him. But this project conceived by his *understanding* of the *poor* and *needy*, was not yet feasible: two centuries of persevering effort and labor were to prepare the realization thereof.

Saint Vincent, speaking of the mission of Madagascar to his Community, took occasion to extol Fathers Nacquart and Gondrée, who had sunk under their labors, and to inspire all his Priests with a holy zeal for the infidel missions.

"O Saviour!" he exclaimed, "I was recently speaking to one of the gentlemen who had returned from this country; O God! what did he not say of Mr. Nacquart! O the great servant of God! *Sanguis martyrum semen Christianorum!* This gives me the hope that his martyrdom—for he died in the cause of God—*will be the seed of Christians*; that God, in consideration of his death, will give us the grace to produce fruit. Our Lord sent the Apostles; he sends as in like manner to bring fire. *Iguem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur?* To carry this divine fire, this fire of love, this fire of the fear of God into Barbary, to the Indies, to Japan. . . .

"Ah! Gentlemen, let us all ask earnestly of God to give us the disposition to go wherever he sends us. So

that on beholding Missionaries, it can be said : These are Apostolic men, ready to go to the four quarters of the globe to preach the word of God !” (Mission, Madagascar.)

Rev. John Baptist Gilles, Priest.

CRECY, July, 1652.

Father John Baptist Gilles, born at Avranches, was thirty-six years of age when our Lord called him to the Company ; he was received into it November 28, 1642. At that period he was the Principal of the College of Lisieux. This college was situated in rue Jean-de-Beauvais, and had been founded by Mgr. Lisieux, hence its title.

Rev. Father Gilles was an ecclesiastic of great merit : learned, devout, and a man of business. Saint Vincent manifested his esteem for the new Missionary by, at once, placing the students of St. Lazare under his direction, and, according to the words of the Saint, he wrought marvels of piety and learning among them. When the Coadjutorship of Babylon was proposed to the Congregation, he was thought of for this Mission ; but, in consequence of divers circumstances, the project was never carried into effect. He was then appointed Superior of the House of Crecy.

Saint Vincent continued to testify a confidence in him of which he ever proved himself worthy. The holy Founder called an Assembly in 1651, inviting Priests of the highest authority and those most familiar with the Institute. It was his intention to examine the rules which had not yet been printed, and to decide the expediency of asking an approval of the Holy See regarding the vows of the Company. Father Gilles was one of those whose advice St. Vincent desired.

And he merited this distinction ; for no one in the Assembly was better informed than he, and no one whose opinion was more conformed to the views of the holy Founder.

APPENDIX.

cxi

The question of vows, which was not yet settled in the rising Institute, afforded Father Gilles the opportunity of expressing his esteem and his ardent love for the Congregation, and of attesting the happiness he would experience, and the benefit he would derive in binding himself to it by the sacred obligation of the vows.

“The Company, said he, cannot subsist without vows. And it would be desirable that private members should dispossess themselves of their right of succession, and of the temporal administration of their property, for the hearts of men are always the same; they are tempted “to offer God the poorest sheep, keeping the best for themselves;” *quia offerunt macras subtrahunt pingues*; and as long as we have possessions, or hope to enjoy them, we look back, like Lot’s wife.”

Considering the reasons which should prompt the adoption of these sacred engagements, he justly alleged the painful life to which the vocation of the Missionaries subjects them.

“Perhaps, said he, if their occupations were different, they might be dispensed from these ties; but it is all-important to strengthen us against ourselves, because the duties of the Missions are very wearisome, especially for the aged, on account of the continual and necessary journeys which they demand, and which are so opposed to that quiet stability which nature seeks; man, like the tree, tends to take root. *Homo ut arbor mitte radices.*”

As for himself, he declared, that “if obliged to live on bread and water, he would not leave the Congregation.”

Saint Vincent, in preserving his habitual reserve, clearly manifested his desire that the Assembly should sanction the practice already in use, of making vows. Father Gilles was to him an able support.

Bringing forward personal experience and the dis-

gust which fatigue, nature, or the devil excites from time to time in the best souls, he said : “ My vows have proved a restraint to me ; they saved me, when, already advanced in years, I was placed under a Superior twenty-five years old.”

Then, turning to those who, it seemed, did not apprehend any relaxation of first fervor, and who were in favor of a change in a practice already introduced into the Congregation, he said : “ This would injure the Company, or expose it to danger, because, as Aristotle says : *Omnis mutatio morbus* : Every change is disorder.” A Statesman said to me :

